DISTRICT GAZETTEERS

OF

EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM

BOGRA

BY

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INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE.

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ERRATA.

For		*Read*		Page	Line
Bājbansi	...	Rājbansi	...	19	10
two-thids	...	two-thirds	...	43	4
chhāōyālē	..	*chhāōyātē*	...	47	47
chhāwālē	...	*chhāwātē*	...	47	47

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percentage	...	proportion	...	50	16
nāugal	...	*nāngal*	...	72	2
Improvemment	...	Improvement	..	73	3 & 4 of the marginal heading.
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contervailing	...	countervailing	...	88	27
passes	...	passed	...	93	28
Fu lb ār	...	Phulbāri	...	106	49
carbs and	...	carts	...	108	44
ākhirāj	...	*lākhirāj*	...	119	1
mediaeva	...	mediaeval	...	155	5
laves	...	slaves	...	155	6

PREFACE.

THE present *Gazetteer* of the District of Bogrā has no pretensions to be an original work. The last Statistical Account of Bogrā was compiled by Mr. C. J. O'Donnell, I.C.S., and as he had a personal knowledge of the district, the compilation was a particularly full and exhaustive one. But the lapse of over thirty years has made many changes necessary, and almost the whole of the present volume had to be re-written. Much valuable information about the antiquities of the district, and of Mahāsthān in particular, is to be found in Sir A. Cunningham's Archaeological Survey Report (Vol. XV). Messrs. Westmacott and Beveridge have also written interesting notes on the district. After the task of writing the present *Gazetteer* had been entrusted to me, I had a careful survey made of the interesting and extensive ruins at Mahāsthān, by Mr. K. C. Nandi, District Engineer of Bogrā, and his labours fortunately have not proved barren of result. The discovery at Mahāsthān of the buried ruins of a Buddhistic temple, completes the chain of evidence by which Sir A. Cunningham and other antiquarians have sought to establish the identity of Mahāsthān, with the ancient town of Paundravardhana, which Hiuen Tsiang visited in the 7th century A. D.

My acknowledgments are due to Mr. J. E. Webster, I.C.S., who, while he held the post of Judicial Secretary to Government, did me the favour of carefully revising the entire portion of this work. I am also indebted to his successor Mr. R. B. Hughes-Buller, C.I.E., I.C.S., for numerous valuable suggestions. My thanks are also due to Mr. S. G. Hart, I.C.S., Director of Agriculture, for his ready assistance in looking through the chapter on Agriculture, and to Babu Rājendra Lāl Achārji, Sub-Deputy Collector, for supplying me with some very useful materials for the work.

J. N. GUPTA.

BOGRĀ:

31st January 1909.

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GAZETTEER

OF THE

BOGRA DISTRICT.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

Situation.

BOGRĀ (*Bagurā*) District, occupying the east central portion of the Rājshāhi division, under the Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam, lies between 24° 32′ and 25° 18′ north latitude, and between 88° 56′ and 89° 44′ east longitude. It has now an area of 1,359 square miles, with a population according to the census of 1901 of 8,54,533 souls. The principal town which is also the administrative head-quarters of the district, is Bogrā (*Bagurā*), situated on the west bank of the Karatoyā river, in 24° 51′ north latitude and 89° 26′ east longitude.

Boundaries.

The district of Bogrā lies on the right bank of the Brahmaputra (here called the Dāokobā), and is bounded on the north by the districts of Rangpur and Dinājpur; on the south by Pābnā and Rājshāhi; and on the west by Rājshāhi and Dinājpur.

General aspect.

The general aspect of the district is common to all the districts of central Bengal—a great plain, unbroken throughout its whole extent by a single natural rising ground or hill. It escapes, being an absolute dead-level, only by a slight declination, amounting in the whole length of the district to a few feet, from the north-west towards the south and south-east. Its configuration may be described as that of a rhombus, whose major axis lies north-west and south-east, and whose southern corner is wanting. The rivers Karatoyā and Phuljhor divide it longitudinally, north and south, into two portions, whose characteristics are very distinct. The eastern, which is smaller, containing somewhat less than two-fifths of the entire area of the district, may be regarded as forming part of the valley of the Brahmaputra. This tract is generally low-lying, and is intersected by numerous *khāls*, or natural drainage channels, and *jhīls*, or shallow swamps and marshes. It is subject to yearly inundations from the overflow of the Brahmaputra, the Bāngāli, and the Kātākhāli, the last of which now brings down the drainage of much of south Rangpur, which formerly passed southward, without flooding, by the wide bed of the

Karatoyā. The soil is of whitish colour, and is known locally as *pali* (literally, silt-covered). There is a little jungle and a few trees, except on the sandy islands and accretions on the banks of the Dāokobā, where a stunted species of *jhāū* tree (*Tamarix dioica*) is found.

The western portion of the district presents a marked contrast to the eastern. It is well-wooded, dense scrub jungle being found in parts, and is generally above flood level. Its soil, of the kind locally known as *khiār* (sapless), is a hard, compact clay, and of reddish colour. Along its western boundary, and chiefly where it is watered by the Jamunā, it is overlaid by a recent alluvial deposit, never of great thickness, except on the banks and beds of rivers. The occurrence of this soil, here also called *pali*, is due to the overflow of the Atrāi, which, as late as Rennell's time (A. D. 1781), was the main channel of the Tīstā, and then carried the drainage of most of the country between Purneā and Rangpur, and of a large part of the Nepāl mountains. This tract is no longer flooded, but is covered with thick underwood, together with a number of large trees.

A very good idea of the relative firmness of the two soils, *pali* and *khiār*, is afforded by the manner of digging wells in use in the two tracts. In *pali* land a well is lined with earthenware rings to prevent the earth falling in from above and choking up the well. In *khiār* land the well is dug straight down without any such artificial supports. The walls of the dwelling houses in these two tracts also bear witness to the difference in the firmness of the two soils. In the *khiār* tract the peasant uses clay to make the walls of his house, but in the *pali* tract the earth is quite unsuitable for this purpose, and walls have to be made of reeds or mats. Mr. Beveridge has remarked that this difference of soil affects the crime of the district, and burglaries are reported to be rare in the western *thānas*, as it is no easy matter for thieves to break through and steal, when the walls of the houses are so thick and hard as they are in the *khiār* land. The crops that grow in different parts of the district are also characteristic of the soils noticed above. In the silt-laden loamy *pali* tracts jute grows luxuriantly, as also rice and miscellaneous *rabi* crops, but the *khiār* is fit for the cultivation of paddy only.

The *khiār* tract round Bogrā town presents a peculiar appearance on account of the raised plots or strips of land on which the mulberry used to be largely cultivated, and which are generally ten to fifteen feet wide and three to six feet high. The excavations lie longitudinally between the strips, and with the raised land form the most difficult ground for riding possible.

River system.

The rivers of Bogrā, so far as they can be regarded as a system at all, form a part of what may be called the Atrāi tributary system of the Brahmaputra. Taking the Karatoyā as the central dividing water-channel of the district, the other rivers may be classified into the eastern and the western systems. The

course of all the rivers is, with such allowance as must be made for bends and windings, nearly uniformly north and south.

The eastern system comprises the more important rivers Bāngāli, Halhaliā, and Phuljhor, and the minor streams the Valkā and the Mānash. Through the *khiār* tracts in the western part of the district flow the Nāgar, the Tulshīgangā, and other minor streams. All the rivers are, as said above, indirectly tributaries of the Brahmaputra, falling as they do into the Atrāi, which itself flows into the Brahmaputra in the district of Pābnā, twelve miles north of the confluence of that river with the Ganges at Goālundo. First premising that the Atrāi flows through no part of Bogrā, but that from the direction of its course southwards along the western frontier of the district, and then eastward not far from its southern boundaries, it is a natural recipient of all the waters of the district, the following tabular form may be taken as illustating the internal river system of Bogrā:—

Eastern system ...	Kātākhāli, Bāngāli, Halhaliā	Phuljhor.	Atrāi—Brahmaputra.
Central ,, ...	Karatoyā		
Western ,, ...	Jamunā, Tulshigangā, Nāgar		

The Brahmaputra

The reach of this river which begins at the extreme north-east of the district and stretches down to the confluence of the Mānash, is locally called the Dāokobā or "hatchet-cut river," and the name has come to be applied by the common people to the whole length of the river in this district. The Brahmaputra once followed a very different course from the one it now pursues, and tradition relates that it was led into its present bed by a peasant's cutting of a small channel in its bank with a *dāo* or hatchet, in order to catch the fish the inflowing water might bring, and that the little cut grew into a great breach, through which ultimately the whole body of the river found its way. The change in the course of this river has been described below. The Dāokobā reach is a clear open piece of water, with very few sandbanks in it, and is one of the finest in Bengal. South from where the Madhukhāli joins it, it is sometimes broken into as many as four channels, interlacing between sandy banks and islands, often of considerable size. In some points it is not less than four miles wide, even in the hot weather, with many islands or *chars* in its midst, which being formed of fine sand, are constantly shifting. In the spring, when a breeze always prevails, a haze caused by the sand suspended in the air hangs over the river, making it difficult to see any distance along it. These shifting islands are quite valueless, as no vegetation grows on them, the only sign of life they occasionally afford being a fisherman's hut put up temporarily with a few mats and bamboos whilst he is watching his nets. But the old deserted beds of the river are now covered with rich silt every year and yield an abundant harvest of rice and other crops. There are no considerable villages or markets on the Bogrā bank of the Brahmaputra, the principal trading centres in that part of the

district lying at some distance inland, on the minor rivers, Bāngāli, Mānash, and Halhaliā. This is due to the constant fear of a change of the course in the river, which might leave a village a mile in shore one year or swallow it up the next. A considerable part of the bank on the Bogrā side is rendered dangerous by quicksands. At the time when the last *Gazetteer* was written the river was breaking westwards, and in 1888 Mr. O'Donnell found the main channel, up which steamers plied to Assam, only a mile from Naokhīlā. The current of the river has, however, again changed its course, and the main channel is moving steadily eastwards and the river is now nearly seven miles from Naokhīlā. The Brahmaputra is navigable, not only for the largest native boats but also for river steamers of considerable tonnage, which pass by this route in large numbers, and at all seasons of the year, to Dhubri and other Assam stations.

The Bāngāli. The Bāngāli comes from the Rangpur district, and enters Bogrā in the Shariākāndi *thānā*, about three miles to the south-east of the Sonātolā Railway station on the Brahmaputra-Sāntāhār Branch Railway. It has received a considerable accession of volume from the diversion of the waters of the Karatoyā down the Kātākhāli, occasioned by the floods of 1820. The Kātākhāli is a cross channel which has broken its way from the Karatoyā, near Govindaganj, into the Bāngāli at Rāmnagar. It is now included in the limits of Rangpur. From Sonātolā the Bāngāli runs south-east, past the important village of Madhupur, the site of the old police station, and then skirts Harikhāli, a growing market, till it reaches Shariākāndi, where the present *thānā* is situated. It continues to travel south-east till it reaches Chhāihātā, an important village in the *zamindāri* of Babu Tārā Sankar Ghosh. At this point, close to Joregāchhā, the river bifurcates into two streams, one of which takes a straight southerly course and is known as the Hniāli or Halhaliā. The Halhaliā practically divides *thānās* Bogrā and Sherpur from Dhunot. The other branch continuing to be called Bāngāli takes a south-easterly course. It flows past the Dhunot *thānā* and the important market of Elangi. Both branches again reunite at Bathuābāri, in Dhunot *thānā*, to form the Phuljhor river. The river continues to flow southwards till it reaches Penchibāri *bandar*, where it takes a slightly westerly course till it reaches Kalyāni, an important *Kachāri* of the Tarās *Zamindārs*. At this point, which takes the name of Khānpur *Mohānā* from an adjacent village of that name, the Karatoyā falls into the Phuljhor. The latter stream continues to flow through the district for another eight miles, till it enters the district of Pābnā. Madhyabhāg and Simābāri in Bogrā, and the important mart of Chāndaikonā, adjoining Simābāri, but in the jurisdiction of Pābnā, are villages situated on this portion of the Phuljhor. The Bāngāli, the Halhaliā and Phuljhor are navigable throughout the year for boats of three or four tons of cargo, and become in the rainy season the

main arteries by which boat traffic is extended all over the east of the district.

The Bāngāli has a few small tributaries. Amongst these may be mentioned the Belāi, which branches off from the Brahmaputra near Pākurchar. It flows past Mathurāpārā, an important centre of trade, and Deodāngā, and falls into the Bāngāli at Rāmchandrapur. Its course is confined within the jurisdiction of the Shariākāndi *thānā*, and is about twenty miles in length. The stream dries up in most parts in the hot weather, but assumes the proportions of a fairly large river in the rains. The Mānash is another tributary. It was formerly a river of about the same size as the present Bāngāli, rising in the district of Rangpur, and at one time connected with the Ghāghat. The Brahmaputra has, however, nearly obliterated all trace of it, and the short channel, by which it is at present represented, rises from the Brahmaputra near the Sonpachā *char*, flows past Kutubpur and Chandanbāsiā, and then falls into the Madhukhāli near Aolākāndi. This last stream, which also is apparently a remnant of the old Mānash, branches off from the Brahmaputra, receives the Mānash, and flows past the flourishing and important marts of Gossāinbāri and Barabilā, and finally joins the Bāngāli near the Dhunot *hātkholā*. At this point another stream known as the Ichhāmatī breaks off towards the south, goes past Bhānudāngā and enters Pābnā. The important trade centre of Sonāmukhi in Pābnā stands on this river, on the opposite side of Bhānudāngā. All these streams dry up in the hot weather, but are navigable in the rains. Tributaries of the Bāngāli.

The Valkā is a small stream which rises from the Bāngāli near Shyāmpur in Shariākāndi, flows past Karamjā, Bogārmelā, and Phulbāri, and then enters Bogrā *thānā* and joins the Bāngāli at Kālāihāttā in Bogrā. Its entire course is about 25 miles long.

The Karatoyā was once a stream of great magnitude, but it is now shallower than most of the rivers of the district. There have been important changes in the course of this river which have been described in a subsequent paragraph. At present the Karatoyā runs from north to south through the heart of the district, constantly turning back on itself with great windings, so much so, that though from Bogrā civil station to the point on the north frontier, where it enters the district, is only sixteen miles, the distance by river is fully fifty. Its course lies first through Sibganj, then through the middle of Bogrā, and finally through Sherpur police division, about the centre of which it falls into the Phuljhor at Khānpur. One branch of it, however, locally known as the *purānā* Karatoyā (old Karatoyā), passes by Mirzāpur and Bhawānipur, and joins the Phuljhor lower down in the Pābnā district. On its banks are situated the following important towns and villages:—Mirzāpur, Sherpur, Kālitalā (in the Bogrā township), Gokul, Mahāsthān and Sibganj. The Karatoyā has no tributary of importance in this district. The Gāngni is a petty stream, eight miles long, which The Karatoyā.

rises in a swamp, and falls into the Karatoyā near Chādni. The Subil, a mere *khāl* rising in a swamp, known as Sarai Garai, flows for some nine miles, and joins the river a mile north of the civil station.

The Nāgar. The Nāgar is a branch of the Karatoyā, and has no tributaries in this district. About eleven miles north of Bogrā, it is united with the parent stream by a channel about half a mile long, which, except in the rains, is quite dry. At the point where it broke away, a tributary of the Karatoyā, Gāngni, formerly fell into the latter river. This stream now seems to be the upper part of the Nāgar, and to form with it a separate river. The Nāgar is the boundary between the police divisions of Bogrā and Sibganj, for about seven miles. It then passes between the former and the police outpost of Dhupchānchiā, and then of Adamdīghi, down to the important village of Chāmpāpur, and the adjacent mart of Elāhiganj, where it turns off westwards and runs through the latter police division for some five miles, and then passes into Rājshāhi district, and falls into the Atrāi, near the Sīngrā *thānā*. It is a tortuous river, and its whole length in this district, including windings, is about thirty miles. The important markets of Burīganj, Dhupchānchiā, and Elāhiganj are situated on its banks. In the rainy season boats can go up as far as Chāndniā, a great commercial town of these parts in former days.

The Jamunā. This river rising from some hills in the Jalpāigurī district enters the Panga jungle of the same district, and it then runs, through the eastern part of the Dinājpur and enters the Bogrā district, about a mile north of Hilli *bandar*. It meanders southwards till it receives the waters of its tributary, the Chhirī Nadi, near Khanjanpur, the head-quarters of the Jaipur Government estates. It then proceeds south-west and leaves the Bogrā district near villages Haripur and Deor, about six miles south-west of Khanjanpur This river and the Tulshīgangā were the chief means of transport in these parts, before the advent of the railway. It is navigable for small boats almost throughout the whole year, but boats of larger tonnage can no longer pass through it, except in the rains.

The extent of the old bed of the river shows that it was much larger formerly than it is now. Several flourishing *bandars* existed on its banks in former times. Of these, the one at Belāmlā was the biggest and most flourishing. Its prosperity ceased with the opening of a rival market at Bānkidaha, which was another name of Khanjanpur, about a century ago. But with the deterioration of the river, and the opening of the Northern Bengal State Railway, Bānkidaha market was in its turn eclipsed by a new market which was opened near the Railway station at Jaipur Hāt. The next important market on the bank of the river which has existed from former times, is the one at Hilli. The silting up of the river has not affected it, because the new railway line was

taken along its side, and an important railway station was opened near the site of the old market. Pānchbībī was another important market on the side of this river, but its place has now been taken by the Government market at Bālighātā, near the Pānchbībī Railway station. This river runs a course of about forty miles in the district.

The Tulshīgangā.

Next in importance is the Tulshīgangā. It springs from a *bīl* called Ponārdaha, near village Nirsha Disandi, in the jurisdiction of Nawābganj *thānā* of the Dinājpur district. It enters the Bogrā district near village Mukundapur, in *thānā* Pānchbībī, and runs south-west in a meandering course, till it enters the Jamunā, at village Itākātā near Akkelpur. The river from beyond this point is known as the Jamunā, and flowing past Naogāon falls into the Atrāi. The principal places on its banks are Pāthuriāghātā, where there are some old relics and an annual fair is held in the month of Chaitra, Sonāmukhi, an important rice market, and Akkelpur where there is a Registration office. It runs a course of about forty miles in the district.

The Chhiri Nadi.

This stream takes its rise from Nuniādaha Bīl in the Dinājpur district. It enters the Bogrā district near village Sālnā, in the Pānchbībī *thānā*. and after meandering through the district for about thirty miles, falls into the Jamunā near Khanjanpur. The only market near its banks is the new Government market at Koriā recently started by the *khāsmahāl raiyats*.

The Chhota Nadi or Kātā Jamunā.

This narrow canal, which is dry in several places during the greater part of the year, is an artificial branch of the Jamunā, and is said to have been excavated about a century and a half ago by Rājib Lochan Mandal, the rich merchant *zamindār* of Belāmlā, to whom the greater part of the *khāsmahāl* belonged, before its purchase by Government. This was apparently done with a view to connecting the Tulshīgangā with the Jamunā for commercial purposes. The canal starts from Sikolā near Khanjanpur, and proceeding almost directly south for about eighteen miles, joins the Tulshīgangā a little above Akkelpur. The most important place on its bank is Jamālganj, a rising centre of trade, and a station of the Northern Bengal State Railway. The Government market at Rukīndīpur is situated about half a mile to the west of this river near Jamālganj. The Government market at Dūrgādaha is also on its bank.

The Harāmati.

This small stream which looks like a *nullāh*, starts from the Tulshīgangā near Khanjanpur, and falls into the same river near Bāttāli, after a course of about fifteen miles.

Changes in the river courses. The Brahmaputra.

Changes in the river courses in Bogrā district are most evident in the cases of the Dāokobā or Brahmaputra, and the Karatoyā. The former river has so completely changed its direction and bed during the last century, that it may be considered an entirely new branch of the river system of Eastern Bengal. It originally flowed round the foot of the Garo Hills, east of the Madhupur jungle, and after discharging its silt into the Sylhet *jhīls* poured its water into the Meghnā. It was not till the

beginning of the century that, having raised its bed and lost its velocity, it was no longer able to hold its own against the Meghnā, and being forced to seek another outlet for its banked-up waters, suddenly broke westward and joined the Ganges near Goālundo.

At present it flows between the Shariākāndi police division of Bogrā, and the Dīwānganj police division of Mymensingh, passing within seven miles of the village of Shariākāndi. In 1781, when Major Rennell published his Bengal Atlas, it bent away eastward from Dīwānganj and was about eighteen miles from Shariākāndi. The Jamunā was then a small branch, and its upper part was called the Janāi. Thirty years later, when Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton visited these parts, the change of course had begun to be effected, a branch having been thrown out, which ran west of Dīwānganj, and which in the map he compiled appears nearly as long as the main stream. Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton remarks that "the river threatens to carry away all the vicinity of Dīwānganj" This prophecy has since been accomplished. In Rennell's map, the Konāi and Jamunā are separate rivers, running nearly parallel to one another, from eight to ten miles apart. The former also received the waters of the Bāngāli, which was then unconnected with the Karatoyā. The latter river fell into the Konāi, about twenty miles south of its present confluence with the Bāngāli. Altogether the river system of the whole of the country between the Karatoyā and the high country in Mymensingh, known as the Madhupur jungle, has been so entirely broken up, that it is impossible to identify most of the rivers except by name; and even as to names, in at least one instance, the Mānash, an entirely new branch of the Brahmaputra, has received the name of a river which has disappeared, and which actually flowed at right angles to the present river.

The Karatoyā.

The past history of the Karatoyā is still more interesting. "Along the northern frontier of Bengal numerous rivers debouch from the Himālayas. These now discharge their waters by various channels into the Ganges or Brahmaputra. But it appears that, formerly when these rivers were still 150 miles apart, the Himālayan streams united to form a great independent river, the Karatoyā, which found its way to the sea. The memory of this ancient river is preserved in the *Purānas* and its mermaid goddess found in the ruins of Mahāsthān was widely worshipped." * The etymology of the word "Karatoyā," says Beveridge, is an indication of the antiquity and sanctity of the river. The name is derived from *kar*, the hand, and *toya*, water, and is held to signify that the river was formed by the water which was poured on the hands of Siva, when he married the mountain goddess Pārvati. This myth also points to the mountainous origin of the river. The Karatoyā is mentioned in the *Jogini Tantra* as the western boundary of the ancient kingdom of Kāmrupa, and it was along its right bank that

* Gait's "Census of Bengal," page 3.

Bakhtiyār Khilji marched on his ill-fated invasion of Tibet. In the narrative of that expedition it is described as being three times the width of the Ganges. It was no doubt the great river crossed by Hiuen Tsiang on his way to Kāmrupa, and by Husain Shāh on his invasion of the same country. Mr. Gait thinks that possibly the Sankosh and even the Mānash joined it, and the silted up bed of the Mānash in Bogrā may possibly indicate the former course of the river of that name, which now flows into the Brahmaputra above Goalpārā in Assam. The *Paurānik* name of the Kosi was Kauisiki, and it is interesting to note that a Naiad of this name was worshipped on the banks of the Karatoyā.

A tradition exists amongst the people of Bogrā that Sherpur Daskāhania in the Jāmālpur subdivision of the Mymensingh district, was so called because each person who ferried over the Karatoyā from Mymensingh-Sherpur to Mahāsthān had to pay a ferry fee of ten *kāhans* or ten times 1,280 *kauri* (shells), so great was the river in the old days. The '*Laghu Vārata*' refers to this tradition, with regard to which Beveridge remarks that it does not seem to be a very probable one, "for ten *kāhans* is equal to one rupee, and I can hardly believe that any Bengali ever paid so much in crossing a river!"

Turning to more recent times, we find the Karatoyā in Van den Broucke's map of Bengal, prepared in 1660, distinctly marked as a very great river, and as connected with the Brahmaputra. It is also shown as a very large river in Major Rennell's map prepared in 1789; and Buchanan-Hamilton in his accounts of Dinājpur and Rangpur, compiled about the year 1810, speaks of it as "a very considerable river of the greatest celebrity in Hindu fable."

The causes of its subsequent falling off, however, date from twenty two years earlier. The diminution must have been a very sudden one, as the old banks of the river are distinctly traceable nearly a mile apart, and between them and the present narrow bed there is no sign of an intermediate level. In the maps compiled by Buchanan-Hamilton, the upper part of the Karatoyā is called the Tīstā, showing that at the time he wrote, some at least of the waters now carried off by the largest river in Rangpur passed down the Karatoyā. The following notice of it, a hundred miles north of the Bogrā frontier, is perhaps the best evidence of its then size:—"Below this, for some way, the Karatoyā forms the boundary between Rangpur and Purneā, when, turning towards the east, it passes entirely through the former and has on its southern bank a considerable mart, to which boats of 100 *mans* burthen can come in the rainy season." "The Karatoyā then continues its course to the south-east for about three miles, when it joins the old Tīstā and loses its name, although it is at present the most considerable stream." "The floods of 1787 seem to have totally changed the appearance of this part of the country and to have covered it to such an extent with beds of sand, that few

of the old channels can be traced for any distance. These sands have been year after year brought down the Karatoyā, till at the present time they have completely closed it up in police division Sibganj, and rendered the rest of the river below very shallow." About A. D. 1820 there was another very heavy flood, which broke through the east bank of the Karatoyā, nearly opposite Govindaganj police station, which was then included in Bogrā district, and made its way up to the Bāngāli. The name of the new channel, Kātākhāli, suggests a partially artificial origin for the deviation of the stream. Some such petty interference with the bank as that to which the Dāokobā is said to have owed its existence, is perhaps referred to.

Even the present bed shews that frequent changes in the course of the river have taken place. One deviation must have occurred near Mahāsthān, where the old bed and the present channel of the river practically surround the ruins of the old town and give it the appearance of an island, which fact no doubt led the writers of the *Skanda Purāna* to describe Mahāsthān as *Sīla Dwīpa*. Another deviation occurred midway between Bogrā and Sherpur where there are signs of an equally large diversion; whilst every two or three miles are seen considerable islands of red soil, surrounded by alluvium, which show the varying directions of the river.

The rapid silting up of the river, and the diversion of at least half its waters, seem to have drawn attention about 1850. In 1854, an engineer was deputed to report on what could be done to improve the bed of the river. In 1856, Act XXII of that year enacted provisions for "Establishing a toll on Boats and Timber passing through the Karatoyā river in the District of Bogra." This measure was so framed as to aid a liberal proposal made by the Honourable Prasanna Kumār Tāgore, C.S.I., of Calcutta, to undertake certain improvements, on condition of being permitted to levy tolls. It appears from a report published in the *Gazette* of October 31, 1863, that the works for rendering the river navigable, consisting chiefly of embankments at Govindaganj, were completed in 1860, and that tolls were first levied in that year. The original cost of the works was Rs. 53,110, and large sums were annually expended on repairs. The total number of boats, etc., that passed in 1861 was 22,171, and in 1862, 23,237, making an aggregate of 45,408 for the two years. Difficulties, however, had already arisen. By the Government grant, permission was given to levy tolls at the three stations (*chauks*) of Khānpur, Gosāinpur, and Sibganj. During the rains, however, when the numerous drainage channels or *khāls* fill, boats were able, by taking advantage of them, to pass upstream without paying toll. In order to prevent this, temporary toll stations were established, without the sanction of Government. Apart from the legal consequences involved by this step, it was evident that the undertaking had failed. In the rains it was unnecessary, as the river had then

more than sufficient water for the largest boats, and the embankments were in fact injurious to traffic by greatly increasing the force of the current. In the dry and hot weather the great majority of the boats stopped at Khānpur, that is, at the end of the Phuljhor, and did not go up the Karatoyā at all. The Collector repeatedly reported that the toll was an unnecessary tax, and at last in 1865, the grant to Prasanna Kumār Tāgore was recalled.

Lines of drainage.

The lines of drainage in the west of the district are almost uniformly from north to south, except where short channels from the marshes run transversely to join the main channels or rivers. In the eastern portion the drainage is quite as often from east to west as from north to south, but the main channels, the Bāngāli and Dāokobā, follow the latter direction.

Lakes and marshes.

There are no lakes in the Bogrā district, but marshes and *bīls* are numerous. Of these, the best known are the Raktadaha in Adamdīghi, which gets connected with the Chalan Bīl in Rājshāhi during the rains; the Nurāil Bīl and the Keshpāthār Bīl in Bogrā *thānā*; and the Sāt Bīl and the Gobarchāpā Bīl in Shariākāndi *thānā*. Besides these there are numerous small marshes, specially in the eastern part of the district, which dry up from the end of January till the rains, when the overflow of flood-water from the Brahmaputra and the Bāngāli submerges the greater portion of this part of the country and gives it the appearance of an extensive lake. Nothing has yet been done to drain these swamps, though a certain amount of *bīl* paddy is even now grown in them.

Fisheries and Fishes.

Most of the important fisheries, *viz*., the Dāokobā, the Bāngāli, Halhaliā, Ichhāmati and Mānash, are in the *pali* tract, and furnish three-fourths of the whole fish suppply of the district. The entire police division of Shariākāndi is subject to annual inundation, and fish from the rivers Dāokobā and Bāngāli migrate into the *bīls* and shallow marshes, where they are caught in winter.

The *khiār* tract of the district is intersected by the Nāgar and the Tulshīgangā rivers and a few *khāls*, and in this part of the district small fishes are chiefly found. In the Nāgar river fishes from the Chalan Bīl migrate, and during the time of migration they are caught in large numbers. In this tract there are numerous tanks, and in some of them fishes are reared.

Fisheries constitute a valuable source of income to their owners. The Dighāpatiyā estate contains about twenty-one fisheries. In the year 1285 B. S., when settlement was made for the first time, the income of the estate from this source was Rs. 3,704; at present the income has risen to Rs. 6,217.

There has been a great change in the price of fish within the last twenty years. A good-sized *Rohit* now sells for Rs. 5 or Rs. 6, some ten years ago the price was half the amount.

There are various methods of capturing fish, the most important being:—(1) Netting, (2) trapping, (3) spearing, and (4) angling.

Some of the most important fish markets are Fateh Ali *bazar* (Bogrā), Kālitolā Hāt, Nungolā Hāt, Sultānganj Hāt, Mahishāban Hāt, Dhupchānchiā Hāt, Dhāp Hāt, Jaipur Hāt, Hilli Hāt, Elangi Hāt, Gosāinbāri Hāt, Mokāmtolā Hāt, Bihār Hāt.

The Statistical Account gives a list of thirty-seven varieties of fish found in the tanks and rivers of the district. Of these the following are the most common:—*Kai* (*Coius cobojius, or Perca vagabunda*), (2) *Chaprā* or *Khalisā* (*Trichopodus khalisa*, or *Perca selacea*), (3) *Rohit* (*Cyprinus ruhita*), (4) *Mirgal* (*Cyprinus mirga*), (5) *Nauchī*, the small fry of the three last species, (6) *Naolā*, the same when grown larger, (7) *Bāus* (*Cyprinus kalibausa* or *atratus*), (8) *Punthī* (*Cyprinus putitoria*), (9) *Saral punthī* (*Cyprinus Sar putitoria*), a larger variety of *punthi*, (10) *Pābdā* (*Silurus pabda*), (11) *Kānach* (*Silurus pugentissimus*), commonly known in other districts as *Singhī*, (12) *Māgur* (*Silurus batrachus*), (13) *Chital* (*Mystus chittala*), (14) *Dhāin* (*Pimelodus siloudia*), (15) *Pāngās* (*Pimelodus pangas*), (16) *Tāngar* (*Pimelodus tengra*), (17) *Bāchā* (*Pimelodus bacha*), (18) *Air* (*Pimelodus air*), (19) *Hilsā* (*Clupea alosa*), (20) *Chelā* (*Clupea cultrata*). Turtles, crabs, and shrimps are also common.

Geology. The existence of two distinct soils lying side by side, yet in no way intermingling, neither formed in any degree by the waste of the other, and generally separated by the Karatoyā, has already been mentioned. The western portion presents some of the characteristics of the older alluvium formation of the Bārind, which is usually composed of massive argillaceous beds of a rather pale, reddish brown hue, often weathering yellowish, disseminated throughout which occur *kankar* and pisolitic ferruginous concretions. In fact, it would seem that the Karatoyā marks the boundary where the Gangetic detritus from the west meets and joins the delta, which the Brahmaputra has built out from the east, forming together the great alluvial plain of Bengal. If such had been the case, it would be probable that this line of union would at first present the features of a great estuary, and later on of a great river. The period of estuarian formation is far beyond the memory of man, though evidenced by the sand underlying the *khiār*, but both external and internal evidence based on the present condition of this district, and of Pābnā and Rangpur to the south and north, point to the fact that a great river did once flow in or near the present bed of the Karatoyā.

Fauna. Of the larger sorts of game, tigers which once abounded in this district have now completely disappeared. It is now difficult to believe that in December 1864, a party of hunters brought the skulls of 257 tigers and leopards to the Collector and obtained about Rs. 700 as rewards.

Leopards are still common in the police division of Pānchbībī and Sherpur, and are occasionally seen in almost every part of the district. Wild boars, once a pest in the Pānchbībī police division, are getting scarce. Wild buffaloes and deers have disappeared altogether. Hares, porcupines and wild cats are occasionally seen. Jackals and foxes are met in almost every village. Bogrā is notorious for its venomous snakes, the cobra and the *karāit* being the most common kinds. Squirrels and monkeys which do so much damage to fruits elsewhere, are conspicuously absent in this district.

Of the game birds, the indigenous quail (button quail), and the black partridge are found in the scrub and grass jungle of the Pānchbībī *thānā*. A few indigenous whistling and cotton teals are also found in the *bīls* and lonely tanks of the district. Migratory quail seldom visit this district, though they are to be found in large numbers in the almost neighbouring district of Mālda. Migratory ducks, chiefly the pochard, the gadwall, the pintail, and teal, in small numbers, come to the larger *bīls*, and to the *chars* of the Brahmaputra. Geese and Brāhmani duck abound in the *chars* of the Brahmaputra, but it is almost impossible to bag them. Snipe are fairly numerous in some years. They are to be found in the standing paddy, but seem to prefer the grass and lotus leaves in the *bīls*, specially towards the close of the season in January and February. Ortolans are also common all through the cold weather.

Botany. Where the ground is not occupied by the usual crops of Northern Bengal, it is covered by an abundant natural vegetation, except in the beds of the greater rivers which are swept during the rains by a strong current. Old river-beds, however, ponds and marshes, and streams with sluggish current, have a copious vegetation of *Vallisneria* and other plants. Land subject to inundation has usually a covering of Tamarisk and reedy grasses, and in some parts where the ground is more or less marshy *Rosa involucrata* is plentiful. Few trees grow on these inundated lands; the most plentiful and largest is *Barringtonia acutangula*. The district contains no forests, but in the Bārind, gigantic *pīpāl* (*Ficus religiosa*) and even some *sāl* trees (*Shorea robusta*) are to be seen. Dense scrub jungle still remains in places in the Sherpur and Pānchbībī *thānās*, but the greater portion of the surface is covered with grasses, the commonest of these being *Imperata arundinacea* and *Andropogon aciculatus*. Among the trees the most conspicuous are the red cotton tree or *simul* (*Bombax malabaricum*) and the jack tree (*Artocarpus integrifolia*); the *sissū* (*Dalbergia sissoo*) and mango occur as planted or sometimes self-sown species.

Pasture grounds. There is no want of pasturage in this district, except perhaps in the Adamdīghi police division, and during the rains and floods in the eastern part of the district. During the hot weather and rainy season, however, some of the large cattle-keepers and rearers take their herds to the southern slopes of the Himālayas on the borders

of Nepāl. The smaller herds are kept at home, and, if necessary, fed on rice-straw. Within the district, the best pasture ground is found on the older sandy banks or *chars* of the Brahmaputra, which are always covered with a coarse grass, and sometimes also produce the fine *dūb* grass (*Cynodon dactylon*). These latter lands are not brought into cultivation in consequence of any unfertility, but from fear of floods. The waste lands in Pānchbībī police division, which are not too densely covered with jungle, are also resorted to.

Climate.

The climate of Bogrā is little different from that of most Central and Eastern Bengal districts. The hot weather commences in April, and lasts the greater part of three months, when it is succeeded by the rains which continue up to the middle of October. Though the rains then practically cease, the cold weather cannot be said to begin till the middle of November. The heat is, on the whole, less severe than in districts which are in the same latitude, but further to the west; and the cold weather is rather longer. The direction of the winds in the cold weather and beginning of the year is from the north, occasionally veering round towards the north-east. As the year advances and the weather gets warmer, the breeze becomes more and more easterly, changing right round to west in April and May. Sometimes, even in those months, a breeze comes up from the east, and is much cooler than the west wind, which is part of the great hot winds of Upper India. The coolness of the easterly breeze is probably due to its passing over the Brahmaputra. In the rains the wind is south and south-east, and west or north-west during the period between the cessation of the rains and the regular cold weather. The healthiest months of the year are January to March.

Temperature and Rainfall.

Bogrā, like other districts in North and East Bengal, does not suffer from the extremes of temperature, which are experienced in Bihār. Rainfall commences earlier, and is due to the southerly winds, which blow almost continuously across Bengal in March and April. The moist air from the Bay is diverted eastward and causes numerous more or less local showers in the eastern districts Only a fraction of an inch falls monthly from November to February. As in these cold-weather months northerly or north-easterly winds from the Himālayan region prevail, the temperature in Bogrā is comparatively low, the mean temperature being 64°, and the mean minimum temperature 52°, in January. After southerly winds commence in March in lower Bengal, the temperature rises rapidly. Mean temperature is 77° in March, and 84° in April, when it reaches its highest point. This increase in mean temperature is due to the steady rise of night temperature. The highest mean maximum temperature is 96° in April. A steady increase of rainfall takes place in the hot-weather months. The average fall in March is 1·02 inches, in April 2·40 inches and in May 7·89 inches. With the commencement of monsoon weather, heavy precipitation begins with nearly 13 inches in June and July, the average fall in June being 12·83 and in July 13·25. In August

and September the falls are 11·47 and 10·95 inches respectively. From June to September the monthly rainfall varies from 10 to 15 inches on an average, with considerable fluctuations from year to year. The heavy rainfall in North Bengal during the monsoon months is due to the change of direction impressed upon the monsoon current over that area by the Himālayan range. The usual direction of the moisture-laden current is northwards over East Bengal, and as it approaches the northern districts, it is not only diverted westward, but there is increased ascensional motion near the hills. It is owing to this ascensional motion chiefly that Bogrā receives the fairly heavy annual fall of 66·26 inches, nearly three-fourths of which occurs in the months of June to September. Northerly winds commence in October and the cloudless weather, which then sets in, is occasionally broken by the approach of cyclonic storms from the Bay of Bengal; the average rainfall in that month is 4·45 inches. Rainfall is more irregular in September than in other monsoon months, and comparatively dry weather may alternate with heavy rainfall at times with heavy floods. Cyclonic storms from the Bay tend to recurve towards the east at the end of the season, and when this recurving is well-marked, the storms generally break up over North Bengal and the adjacent Himālayas. When this happens, very heavy rain falls over the whole of North Bengal.

Statistics of the rainfall for the various recording stations are given below for the cold weather (November to February), the hot weather (March to May) and the rainy season (June to October). The figures shown are the averages recorded from the earliest year in which rainfall was systematically registered up to the end of 1906:—

Stations.	Years recorded.	November to February.	March to May.	June to October.	Annual average.
Bogrā	32	2·41	12·45	57·91	72·77
Sherpur	25–26	2·08	11·26	50·86	64·20
Naokhilā	25–26	2·05	11·56	49·90	63·51
Pānchbibi ...	25–26	1·46	9·96	53·16	64·58

The weather preserves its humid character with slight variation throughout the year, the ratio of humidity to saturation Humidity.

ranging on an average from nearly 74 per cent. in March to about 89 in July to September, the average for the whole year at the *Sadr* station being 83·9 per cent.

The humidity is least in March and is subject to but slow increase during April. For the next three months, however, it rises rapidly. This is due to the diversion eastward of the moist air from the Bay of Bengal. From July to September it remains steady and thereafter begins to decline.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

Hindu period. Early history.

The town of Bogrā is of comparatively recent origin, and does not appear to have been the scene of any authentic historical events, either during the period of the Musalmān or the British occupation of the country. But though devoid of interest of a strictly historical character, yet a study of its antiquities leaves little doubt "that the District," to quote the words of Mr. Beveridge, "has claims to attention of an enduring order, and that it occupies an important place in the legendary and the earlier historical annals of Bengal."* As we shall presently see, the claims of the district to antiquity rest chiefly on the associations which centre round the ruins of the old fortified town, now known as the Mahāsthāngarh, and the sacred river Karatoyā, which still washes the base of the mounds, which mark the site of the old town. The history of ancient India, as we know, for nearly twelve centuries from the age of Asoka to the advent of the Musalmān conquerors in the 9th country, was shrouded in the mists of obscurity; and it is only recently that scholars and antiquarians, with the help of the evidence afforded by epigraphic, archaeological and numismatic researches, the study of contemporary records of foreign travellers, and the writings of annalists, have succeeded in rescuing from oblivion a few of the landmarks in the story of the civilisation of India during this long period of comparative darkness. It is now the accepted opinion that during this period Eastern India was split up into a number of small principalities or kingdoms; and of these, Paundra, later on known as Bārendra, with its capital town of Paundravardhana, separated by the sacred stream of Karatoyā from the more easterly kingdom of Prāg Jyotisha, or Kāmrūpa, was perhaps the most well-known. Not only does the name occur frequently in the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyana* and the various *Purānas*, but its fame in the 7th century A.D. appears to have been sufficiently great to have attracted the attention of the great Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsiang, and he visited the capital between 629 and 645 A.D., for his Pun-na-fa-tan-na has been accepted to be the Chinese form of Paundravardhana. Again, according to *Rājataramgini* of Kalhana, almost the only work in Sanskrit with any pretensions to historical accuracy, Jayapira, the Rājā of Kashmīr

* Antiquities of Bagurā, by H. Beveridge, C.S., Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. XLVII, Part I, page 89.

visited Paundravardhana at the end of the 8th century. In the copperplate inscriptions of the Pāl kings, the name Paundravardhana *bhukti* (the land of Paundravardhana) is of common occurrence. There are therefore sufficient historical materials for holding that the Paundra kingdom flourished in Eastern Bengal, at least during the first eight centuries after Christ. It is with the capital of this ancient kingdom, that Sir A. Cunningham, after very careful researches, has sought to identify the ruins of Mahāsthān, which lie about eight miles to the north of the head-quarters of Bogrā.

Identification of Mahāsthān with Paundravardhana.

In seeking to establish this identity, Cunningham has chiefly relied on the description given by Hiuen Tsiang of his visit to Pun-na-fa-tan-na (Paundravardhana), and the close resemblance between the account of this town and its vicinity, in the Chinese traveller's famous work Si-yu-ki, and the actual position of the ruins of Mahāsthān and of the other ruins found in its vicinity by Cunningham, when he visited the locality between 1879-80. The point is discussed at length in Cunningham's Archaeological Survey (Volume XV).

"This city," (Paundravardhana) says Cunnigham, "the pilgrim places at 600 li or 100 miles to the east of the Ganges near Rājmahāl. Now this description corresponds exactly with the relative positions of Rājmahāl and Mahāsthān, the latter being just 100 miles to the east of the former." *

His visit to Vāsu Bihār, a village four miles to the west of Mahāsthān, and his researches in the ruins of that place confirmed Cunningham in the opinion which he had already formed. In connection with the ruins of this village, Cunningham says: "One of my objects in visiting this part of the country was to search for the ancient capital which Hiuen Tsiang calls Paundravardhana. I had already decided that Mahāsthān must be the place partly on account of its name, which means simply 'the capital,' and partly because Hiuen Tsiang describes a monastery named Po-shi-po as situated four miles to the west of the city, which is exactly the position of Bihār, with respect to Mahāsthān. But I did not hear of Bhāsu Bihār until my arrival at Bihār itself, when the name at once struck me as being the very one intended by the pilgrim's Po-shi-po. Julien renders the Chinese syllables by *Vāshpa*, which means 'vapour,' and also 'iron'; but I think that the name must be connected with Bhāsu, 'the sun,' and mean the 'splendid or resplendent' monastery. It may be a contraction of *Bhaswat*, 'splendid, shining.' Here the pilgrim found a grand monastery, remarkable for the size and height of its towers and pavilion. At a short distance from the monastery there was a *stūpa* built by Asoka, on the site where Buddha had explained his law to the Devas. Not far from the last place there was a temple containing a statue of Avalokiteswara, which manifested its divine powers by prodigies."

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* Page 110, Archaeological Survey, Vol. XV.

"Now each of these buildings has its representatives in the still existing remains at Bihār. The great monastery I would identify with the mound of Bihār itself, which is 700 feet by 600 feet broad. The *stūpa* is well represented by the solid brick mound of Bhāsu Bihār, which is still 30 feet in height. The vihāra containing the statue of Avalokiteswara is well represented by the ruined temple to the north of the *Stūpa*." *

This conclusion of Cunningham is the more remarkable, because he himself before his visit to Mahāsthān in his work on the "Ancient Geography of India," sought to i'dentify Pābnā with Paundravardhana. †

Conclusive as the reasoning of Cunningham appears to be, the following considerations lend still greater weight to his theory :—

(1) From certain passages in the Karatoyā *Māhātmya*, a poem included in the *Skanda Purāna*, it appears that the Karatoyā flowed past Paundravardhana. ‡

(2) The remains of the Hindu temples mentioned by Kalhan in the *Rājataramgini* are traceable in the ruins of Mahāsthān.

A temple of Kārtikeya (the war god), where Kamalā danced before Jayanta, has been described by Kalhan. The same temple has been referred to in the Karatoyā *Māhātmya* as the temple of Skanda. The site of this temple is well known to the natives of the country, and during the recent excavations ample materials have been discovered to show that a great temple once stood on the mound close to the Karatoyā.

(3) After visiting Paundravardhana, Hiuen Tsiang crossed a large river to go to Kāmrūpa. It has already been noticed that in the *Jogini Tantra* and the *Kālikā Purāna*, the Karatoyā is described as the boundary between Bārendra and Kāmrūpa. So Hiuen Tsiang must have crossed the river Karatoyā near Mahāsthān.

(4) But the final and most conclusive argument in favour of the theory identifying Mahāsthān with Paundravardhana has been afforded by the discovery, during the recent researches at Mahāsthān, of the ruins of at least one gigantic Buddhist temple.

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* Page 103-104, Vol. XV., Archaeological Survey.

† Page 480, Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India.

‡ The following passages occur in the Karatoyā Māhātmya :—

" Paundra Kotishilādvipe mahāpunyeti bishruta, Karatoyā sarinniram sharirādyanta pāvanam."

[In the Koti shilā island (or peninsula), known as Paundra, there is a famous and sacred river named Karatoyā, whose water purifies the whole body (from head to foot).]

Again

Karatoye sadānire saritshresthe subishrute, Paundrān plābayase nityam papam Harakarot-bhabe.

[O thou Karatoyā, O thou always over-flowing with water, O thou chief among the rivers, O thou famous, O thou born in the hand of the Lord Siva, thou ever dost water the Paundras and dost remove our sins.]

This coupled with the fact of the complete absence of any Buddhistic archaeological remains, either at Pābnā or at Panduā in Mālda, the two rival sites which have been suggested by some authorities, makes the case for Mahāsthān very strong indeed.

Story of Paundravardhana (Mahāsthān).

Relying on the identification of Mahāsthān with Paundravardhana, a short digression into the history of this ancient kingdom may not be inappropriate. It has already been pointed out that the kingdom extended to the north of the Ganges and the west of the Karatoyā, which latter river separated it from Kāmrūpa; and Prof. H. H. Wilson, on the authority of the *Vishnu Purāna*, wished to include in it the country up to Chunār.*

According to the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāna*, Vāsudeva, a powerful prince of the Pundra family, is said to have ruled at Paundravardhana, so far back as 1280 B.C.

With the visit of Hiuen Tsiang to Paundravardhana in the 7th century A.D., we enter the domain of fairly authentic history. The pilgrim notes that there were about twenty Buddhist monasteries containing some 3,000 monks, who studied the Hināyana, or the lesser means of advancement, and about one hundred Brāhmanical temples, but the greater number of the heretics were *Nigranthas*, who went about naked. The pilgrim mentions no king, and his silence on this point may be taken as evidence, Cunningham thinks, that Bārendra (Pundra) was in his time one of the dependent provinces of Harshavardhana of Kanauj. The king of the neighbouring country of Kāmrūpa or Assam named Bhāskara Varman is duly noticed, but, as he was certainly tributary to Harshavardhana, Cunningham concludes that the intervening province of Bārendra had been annexed to the kingdom of Kanauj.

Hiuen Tsiang also noticed a large number of boats and trading vessels lying at anchor near the town.

The next authentic mention of Paundravardhana is to be found in the *Rājataramgini*, of Kalhan, compiled in the 12th century A.D. According to *Rājataramgini*, Jayapira, Rājā of Kashmīr (779—813 A.D.) visited Gaura at the end of the 8th century. At that time the king of Paundravardhana was named Jayanta. Jayapira appears to have travelled *incognito*, and stayed unknown in the house of the famous court dancer, Kamalā. He is reported to have slain a lion during his stay and married Kalyan Devi, the only daughter of the king. At that time there were no less than five other kings reigning over the province of Gaura, whom Jayapira subjugated and brought under the sway of his father-in-law, Jayanta From this account and the description of the state of the country about this time (A.D. 779—813) by Tārānāth, it appears that the country of the Paundras was divided amongst at least six petty chiefs.

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* See Wilson's Vishnu Purāna II, pages 133, 170.

It is also clear from Jayapira's story, that so late as the end of the 8th century A.D., Paundravardhana was still the capital of the country to the north of the Ganges, as it had been a century and a half earlier in the time of Hiuen Tsiang, and that it had not yet fallen into the hands of the Pāl kings of Bengal. It did so some time in the 9th century, but the Amālgāchi inscription discovered near Dinājpur shows that the first capital in which any Pāl king actually resided was still the 'Paundravardhana *bhukti*' The capital of their kingdom, however, was removed from Paundravardhana by the Sen Rājās, first to Deopārā or Bārin (an abbreviation of Bārendra) in Rājshāhi, and then ultimately to Gaura about 1169 by Ballāl Sen, the greatest of the Sen kings. The connection of Bogrā with the history of the Hindu kings of Bengal may thus be said to have ceased with the transfer of the capital of Bārendra from Paundravardhana to Gaura by the Sen kings.

Form of government and condition of the people.

Hiuen Tsiang in the 7th century found the people in the enjoyment of a settled form of government, and with a reputation for learning. Jayapira of Kashmīr in the 8th century was greatly impressed with the flourishing condition of the country, and also with the learning of the people. "The ancient inscriptions and manuscripts give us a glimpse of the form of government which then ruled the destinies of the people. It was a kingly form of government, in which the sovereign enjoyed divine honours, as *Parambhattāraka*, an incarnation on earth. But his rule appears to have been properly regulated by definite laws, the laws of Hindu India regarded as sacred commandments, binding on the rulers and the ruled alike. According to such laws, the land belonged to the people, who paid a share of the produce to their sovereign for the protection he offered. In making any royal grant of rent-free lands, the king had, therefore, to assemble all his nobles, officers and citizens to hand over the royal patent with the approbation of all. The feudal system prevailed and the *Sāmantas* or feudal lords exercised semi-independent authority in their respective territories and attended the Imperial Council as nobles of the realm. Under the Pāl kings, the *Mahāsāmantādhipati* was a title of great distinction, which was, according to the inscription of Dharma Pāl, enjoyed by the chief of the feudal lords. The empire was divided into *bhuktis* or provinces, each of which was again divided into *mandalas* or circles. A circle consisted of several *bishayas* or districts composed of villages."*

Muhammadan period. Traditional account of Kamalpur.

Little is known of the history of the district under Muhammadan rule, but tradition relates that after the subjugation of Bengal by Bakhtiyār Khilji, in 1204 A.D., a dynasty of Sen Rājās ruled for nearly a century, over the north-eastern tract of this district, as feudatory chiefs, nominally under the suzerainty of the

* Babu Akhoy Kumar Maitra's Gaura under the Hindus, page 23.

emperors of Dehli, but virtually under the Muhammadan Governors of Bengal. Their capital was at Kamalpur, a few miles to the north of Bhawānipur, and a little to the south of Sherpur, which was said to have been built by Rājā Ballāl Sen. The seat of the goddess Bhawāni was then at Gulfa, otherwise known as Gulta, a few miles to the south-west of Bhawānipur in the district of Pābnā (but now in ruins and buried in jungle). Achyuta Sen was the last prince of the line, and he was overthrown by the Muhammadan Governor, Bāhādur Shāh of Gaura (1310—1330 A.D.), to whom he had given offence. At this time the figure of the goddess was removed from Gulfa, and buried at the present site of Bhawānipur, whence it was dug up a century and a half later.

Conquest of Mahāsthān.

Of the same traditionary character is the story of the Musalmān conquest of Mahāsthān, about the end of the 13th or the beginning of the 14th century. According to the most generally accepted traditions, Mahāsthān was the capital of a minor Kshattriya prince named Parasurām. It is said that a Muhammadan *fakīr*, who bore the name of Shāh Sultān Hazrat Auliā, defeated Parasurām and thus first established Muhammadan rule in this part of Bengal.

When it is remembered that Gaura or Laksmanavati on the north, Lakhnor on the west, Jājnagar on the south, and Vikrampur on the east, were the provincial capitals of the Sen kings of Bengal, and that even according to *Minhājuddin*, Bakhtiyār subdued only the territory in the neighbourhood of Laksmanavati, the rest of the empire being retained by the sons of Laksmana, there is nothing improbable in the tradition that minor Hindu chiefs continued to rule in parts of Bengal, even after the death of Bakhtiyār at Devikot, in North Bengal, in 1205 A.D.

Reference to Sherpur Murcha.

But if the traditional history of Mahāsthān and Bhawānipur connects Bogrā with the earlier Musalmān kings of the "initial period" of Blochmann, that of Sherpur connects it with the later period of Musalmān rule. According to the *Ain-i-Akbari* Mān Singh built a fort here which he called Salimnagar, in honour of Salim, the son of the emperor Akbar, who was afterwards famous as the emperor Jahāngīr. Blochmann seems to think that Sherpur Murcha, where the fort was built, was the Sherpur in Mymensingh. * But this seems very improbable, because even up to the time of Van den Broucke, the Dutch Governor of India in 1660, Sherpur in Bogrā continued to be so important, that it is one of the only three towns shown in the map of Bengal prepared by him, on the great road which then passed eastward and northwards, from Boāliā, (the present Rāmpur Boāliā) through what are now the districts of Rajshāhi, Pābnā, Bogrā and Rangpur, to the Assam frontier. It is significant that in this

* Vol. II, *Ain-i-Akbari*, page 340 (Blochmann's translation).

map, Sherpur is shown as "Ceerpure Mirts." Mirts no doubt standing for Murcha. In the first part of the *Ain-i-Akbari* translated by Jarrett, it is said that *Parganā* Mihimanshāhi is in *Sarkār* Bazuhai (now in Bogrā) also known as Sherpur Murcha,* and the Sherpur in Mymensingh is shown in the same *Sarkār* as Dashkāhania. In fact the Sherpur of Mymensingh is not even shown in Major Rennell's map, 1789. It is well known that it was built by Isā Khān about 1587. Abul Fazl in the *Akbarnāmā* mentions Sherpur Murcha, when describing the struggles of Shāhbāz Khān with the rebels, Isā and Masūm, in 1586. Shāhbāz Khān at first defeated Isā and drove him to the sea in 1585, but in the following year, owing to the unpopularity of Shāhbáz Khān, the imperial armies at first suffered a reverse, and Shāhbāz was compelled to retreat towards Tanda. "After eight days' retreat the army rested to take breath at Sherpur. Then Masūm entrenched himself at Sherpur and Shāhbāz Khān advanced from Bihār crossed the Jumnā and routed the rebels. After the country was clear of the rebels the *amirs* returned to Sherpur Mirāja."†

Sherpur is also mentioned in connection with the siege of Ghorāghāt by the "rebel Dastam Khān Kaksal when Babu Mangāli appears to have marched from Sherpur Mirāja and compelled him to raise the siege."‡

Archaeology. Buddhistic origin of archaeological remains.

As already stated the most important archaeological remains of the district are Buddhistic in origin and are to be found chiefly at Mahāsthān and its neighbourhood. Cunningham's identification of the ruins at Vāsu Bihār, about 4 or 5 miles from Mahāsthān, with the monastery and *stūpas* described by Hiuen Tsiang, has already been alluded to. A detailed account of the existing ruins at Mahāsthāngarh, is to be found in the last chapter. A point of special interest in connection with the archaeological remains at Mahāsthān is the discovery, during the excavations and researches carried on in 1907, of the ruins of a large Buddhistic temple. Previous to this discovery opinion was divided as to whether any of the archaeological remains at Mahāsthān could be identified with Buddhism.

Difference of opinion about the remains at Mahāsthān.

For, Cunningham himself failed to detect anything in the remains at Mahāsthān, which might be connected with Buddhism. In this view he followed the opinion of Beveridge who, in his account of the antiquities of Bogrā, says: "I could find nothing Buddhist at Mahāsthān, and my impression is that Messrs. Westmacott and O'Donnell have been somewhat too ready to

* Jarrett's translation of *Ain i-Akbari*, page 188, Vol. I.
† See Sir H Elliot's History of India, Vol. VI, pages 76 and 77.
‡ See Sir H. Elliot's History of India, Vol. VI, page 79.

believe that Buddhism once prevailed in Bogrā."* Judging from the fact, however, that some of the Pāl kings, who were staunch Buddhists, held their court in the Bārendra country, perhaps in Mahāsthān itself, and that Cunningham himself found important Buddhist remains quite close to Mahāsthān, it would certainly be strange, if it could not be proved that some at least of the existing remains at Mahāsthān are Buddhist in their origin. Mr. Batavyal, a late Collector of the district and an erudite antiquarian, held the view that the chief antiquarian interest of Mahāsthān is Buddhistic. The following occurs in his report (1895) about the antiquities of the district:—"I visited the place (Mahāsthān) in February last. In ancient Sanskrit literature it is known as *Sita Dvipa*. The river Karatoyā divided itself into two branches near the place, uniting again about a mile north of the present town of Bogrā. The place may have been called *dvipa*, for this reason, but I also find that Buddhistic *stūpas* are called in this district by the villagers *dhap* and sometimes as *dip*. *Sita* again seems to be a slight change of the Buddhistic word *sila* (morality). Sita Dvipa or Sila Dvipa was undoubtedly a sacred place of the Buddhists. The north-east angle of the fort was described to me by the local people as *Diper kon* (the Dipa corner). I was struck by the name and on reaching the angle I at once saw the remains of a *stūpa*, beyond the ramparts on the riverside, on the top of which a *Vaisnab* mendicant has established himself. The people then pointed out to me three other *dips* (as they called them) all on the eastern side, just above the bed of the old Karatoyā, the present Muhammadan mosque occupying the site of the southernmost *stūpa*. It is thus perfectly clear that what is called Mahāsthān was originally a group of Buddhistic *stūpas* on the bank of the Karatoyā river, and the whole place obtained the name of Sila Dvipa, or Sita Dvipa under the later Hindu kings of the Sen dynasty, who favoured the worship of Siva and Krishna in preference to Buddha."

Dr. Grierson, at that time Honorary Philological Secretary to the Asiatic Society, to whom the report of Mr. Batavyal was submitted, expressed the opinion, chiefly on the authority of Beveridge and Sir A. Cunningham that the premises advanced by Mr. Batavyal were unsupported by any cogent arguments, and that the Collector had given no authority for the assertions made in his report. The authority that was undoubtedly lacking for most of the statements made by Mr. Batavyal, has however now been fortunately found in the researches, which have been made at this most interesting historical ruin. The most prominent position in the whole of the extensive ruins of Mahāsthān is occupied by a mound, which is topped by a half-buried granite stone, known locally as the *Khodār Pāthar*. Excavations have

* Page 94, Antiquites of Bagurā, Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, No. 1—1878.

been made all round this buried stone. It is now discovered that the place contains a whole mass of buried stones, which mark the site of a great temple or *stūpa*, which was undoubtedly connected with the worship of the Buddhist religion, as on one of the stone lintels, the figures of a row of Buddhas seated in the characteristic posture of Buddha have been discovered.

Numerous Buddhist remains are also to be found in other parts of the district. Sir A. Cunningham found near Khetlāl an image of Buddha, which had also been previously noticed by Mr. Westmacott. Its broken pedestal bears a part of the Buddhistic creed in mediaeval Nāgari letters, reading "*ye dharmma hetu prabhāva hetu teshān*" The characters are not older than the 8th century A.D., nor much later than the 9th, and are frequently found in inscriptions in Northern India. As some figures of the Hindu pantheon were also found near the same place, Cunningham remarks that "the figures shew that the prevailing worship was of Vishnu and Siva, but that the Buddhist religion also existed at the same time".*

Mr. Westmacott was of opinion that the shrine of Nimaishāh in Pātharghātā on the banks of the Tulshīgangā, in the Pānchbībī *thānā* was also erected on the remains of a Buddhistic *stūpā*. Amongst the stones in the bed of the river close to the *stūpa*, Westmacott found the head and shoulders of a colossal statue of Buddha.

Mr. Batavyal also noticed several Buddhistic images, of three of which he had photographs taken, and sent to the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He thus describes them :— Buddhist images.

"Photo No. 1 is that of the image which contains an inscription of which the following is a transliteration:

(1) yē dharmān jētum prabhabān jētum teṣām ta
(2) thā gatārdha badatra;
(3) ṭēṣāncha yē ni.
(4) rādhatraibam byā
(5) ḍi mahā çramaṇḥ.

The words '*tathagatardha*' used in this description, shows that the image was of Buddha's wife. The characters are clearly of the period when the Pāl dynasty ruled in Bengal. The image was discovered in an old tank in Durgāpur village, and is supposed to have been thrown into it for fear of sacrilege. A little bit of the nose is broken, otherwise it is entire."

"Photo No. 2 is an image which was discovered under a tree in the town of Bogrā. There is an exactly similar image in a ruined temple near the famous Badal pillar. People now speak of the image as that of Hara Gauri (Siva and his wife), but there is reason to think that it is really that of Buddha and his wife before the former renounced the world."

"Photo No. 3 is an image which lay amongst a pretty large number of broken images in village Tilock. It also appears to be

* Cunningham's Archaeological Survey, Vol. XV, page 102.

of some Buddhist divinity." "A careful study of these images," concludes Mr. Batavyal, "is, I think, calculated to lead to valuable results and throw much light on the development of modern Hindu religion in Bengal on the base of popular Buddhism, which held supreme authority in these parts almost down to the period of the Muhammadan conquest."

Muhammadan ruins.

As said above all the more ancient archaeological remains of the district are of Buddhist origin, but there are some Muhammadan ruins also, though of a comparatively recent date. Of these, mention may be made of the ruins of the Kharna Masjid in Sherpur, which was built by one Nawāb Mirza Murād Khān in the time of Akbar, and the mosque at Mahāsthān built in the time of the emperor Farrukhsīyar.

Numismatics. Coins found in 1862.

Two authentic finds of coin in Mahāsthān and its immediate vicinity are on record. The first was in 1862, when a number of old coins were found at Brāhmanpārā, a village in the outskirts of Mahāsthān. Two of these were sent by Mr. Beveridge to the Asiatic Society, and were described by Dr. Rajendralāla Mitra as follows: "One of them, with the lion on the reverse, belongs to Mahendra Gupta, or as given on the margin of the obverse, Sri Mahendra Sinha; and the other to Chandra Gupta. The princes belong to the second and third centuries of the Christian Era." Sir A. Cunningham, however, thinks that the learned Doctor was wrong in attributing one of the coins "to a fabulous Mahendra Gupta." "But Mahendra," according to Cunningham, "was the title of Kumār Gupta'.

Cunningham also gives the following reading of the legends on both sides of a similar coin in his own possession:—

Obverse: Sri Mahendra Sinha.

Parākrama

Reverse: Kumār Gupta. *

It has now been established that Mahendra was the surname of Kumār Gupta, who in A.D. 413 or 414 succeeded his father, Chandra Gupta II, and reigned until A.D. 455. †

Coins found in 1874.

In 1874 a pot of old coins was found in *Mahāsthān itself* by a man who was digging a ditch in a *pān* garden. Some of these coins were sent to the Asiatic Society by Major Hume, and later on, one which was lying in the Magistrate's *mālkhānā* was sent by Mr. Beveridge to Professor H. Blochmann. The silver coins are:—

(1) A silver *tānkā* of Shamsuddin Ilyas Shā of Bengal (1339-1358) as published by Thomas in his "Initial Coinage of Bengal."

(2) A silver *tānkā* struck in 862 H. by Mahmūd Shāh I of Bengal.

(3) A silver *tānkā* of the same king but of coarse manuacture. ‡

* Page 117, Archaeological Survey, Vol. XV.
† Imperial Gazetteer, 1908, Vol. II, page 294.
‡ Beveridge, Antiquities of Bogrâ, page 95.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

No systematic effort appears to have been made in the Bogrā district to enumerate the entire population previous to the general census of 1872. In accounts of the district written before that date, and in reports concerning various branches of its administration, conjectural estimates were hazarded, varying from 95,170, the number given in the Annual Police Report for 1863, to 900,000, the figures contained in Thornton's *Gazetteer* of 1854. A small vernacular History of Bogrā published in 1861 called the "*Bagurār Shetihāsh,*" gives the population of the district at 103,633. In 1846 Mr. George Yule, the Deputy Collector, submitted a report in which he estimated the sugar consumption of the district at 45,000 maunds of 80 lbs. each, and allowed 4 lbs. to each individual of the population. From this it would seem that he estimated the population at the same number as is given in Thornton's *Gazetteer*. It must be remembered that all these estimates were made when the district had an area of about 2,160 square miles, being nearly double of its present size. In the census of 1872 the population for the area then included in the district was found to be 1,001,570.

Growth of population. Early estimates.

There is an initial difficulty in making a comparative survey of the growth of the population of the district during the successive decades covered by the census operations since 1872, as the area of the district has undergone considerable changes during these periods. But for purposes of comparison, we may regard a square mile as representing a certain unit of population at each census, and it is thus possible to deduce the figures of the previous censuses on the basis of the area of the district at the last census of 1901. The first regular census of the district taken in 1872 disclosed a population of 689.467 souls for an area of 1,501 square miles. On the basis of the present area the above figure should be reduced to 624,221. The density of population of the district according to the same census was 459 souls to the square mile. At the next census the population of the district was found to have risen to 734,358 souls for an area of 1,498 square miles or according to the present area 666,217 souls. There was therefore an increase of 6·6 per cent. in the population between 1872 and 1881. The mean density of population for the district was found to have risen to 490 persons to the square mile at this census, and the gain per

Recent censuses.

square mile was therefore 31 souls. The census of 1891 showed a still more marked increase in population, the number enumerated being 817,494 souls for an area of 1,452 square miles, which on the basis of the present area, is equivalent to a population of 765,134. There was thus an increase of 14·8 per cent. during the period between 1881 and 1891. The density of population rose from 490 to 563 persons per square mile, showing an increase of 73 souls per square mile. No doubt the chief cause of this marked expansion was the opening of the Eastern Bengal State Railway from Sārā to Siliguri about 1878. Mr. Lyon, the then Collector of Bogrā, in forwarding the report of this census, remarked, "Of the two conditions upon which the growth of the population depends, the natural increase of the resident people and immigration, the former is measured by the excess of births over deaths. This is almost the only cause at work in Bogrā district, since there is scarcely any migration either inwards or outwards. The population here is practically increased by births alone. The number of marriages and births is largely influenced by the general prosperity of the country. The decade between February 1881 and February 1891 was one of prosperity for the district. Scarcity, severe disease, violent storms, and other great disasters were almost unknown; and it is nearly certain that there has been a gradual and considerable improvement in the general condition and in the standard of comfort among the agricultural classes, which form an overwhelming proportion of the whole population of the district."

For the next decade (1891-1901), Mr. Sen, the then Collector, in forwarding the census report of 1901, remarked: "Since 1891 there has been no disaster of any kind, either in the shape of famine or pestilence, to impede progress. There was some scarcity in 1897, but there was no loss of life and local help sufficed to allay it. The inhabitants are well off, and most cultivators hire foreign labour at the time of reaping and sowing. Wages are higher and the local people will rarely condescend to work as coolies. The opening of the railway from Sāntāhār to the Brahmaputra towards the close of the decade promises to still further increase the prosperity of the district, and a great amount of produce is already being exported by means of it. The earthquake of 1897 overthrew most of the brick buildings in the towns of Bogrā and Sherpur, including the Government offices, and struck a serious blow at the prosperity of Sherpur town, which was already decadent; but otherwise no serious harm was done."

As a result we find in the census of 1901, a still more marked growth of the population of the district. It rose to 854,533 with a mean density of 629 inhabitants per square mile. The rate of expansion for this period was therefore 11·7 per cent. or slightly less than that of the decade just preceding. In the whole of North Bengal, Jalpāiguri alone showed a more rapid expansion during this period, for its population appears to have

increased at the rate of 15·6 per cent. But this large increase was chiefly due to immigration into the Duārs, whereas during this period the balance of migration was not much in favour of the district of Bogrā, and the greater part of the increase of population in this decade, as in the last, is attributable to natural causes alone. It is noteworthy that both in Pābnā and Rangpur, two districts to the south and north of Bogrā, the rate of increase was as low as 4·3 per cent. It is to be noted, also, that Bogrā is one of the most thickly populated districts in North Bengal, it being only second to Pābnā, which tops the list with a mean density of 772 inhabitants to the square mile.

Bogrā is most thickly peopled in the east between the Karatoyā and the Dāokobā, where jute is the main staple. This tract also shows a sustained and unusually rapid development. Towards the north-west, the alluvium gives way to the *quasi*-laterite of the Bārind, and the population becomes more sparse, but during the last decade, owing chiefly to the immigration of Bunās and Santāls, the expansion of population was greatest in this part. In the other portions of the *Khiār* or Bārind, to the west of the Karatoyā, the growth of population has been less vigorous, and it has been slowest in the portions in the immediate vicinity of the moribund Karatoyā, in the centre of the district.

The population of Bogrā is almost entirely rural, even its commercial centres being little more than market villages. Only one per cent. of the people live in towns, and the remaining 99 in villages. There is only one town with a population of over 5,000, *i.e.*, Bogrā Municipality, which, according to the last census, had a population of 7,094. This, however, includes not only Bogrā proper, the seat of the district head-quarters, but a number of outlying villages, which are largely agricultural, and at most can only be considered detached suburbs. The population of Bogrā town has not shown much tendency to increase, the rate of increase being 6·4 which is slightly above the rate for the whole *thānā*. The only other town in the district is Sherpur, which according to the census of 1901 had a population of 3,967 souls. Its rate of increase during the last decade was only 3·5 per cent. It is a decaying and unhealthy old town and unless the Municipality makes vigorous efforts to cut down the jungle, with which the town is overshadowed, and improve the sanitation generally, its future is likely to be one of steady decline. The average population per house in Bogrā town was 4·59 and in Sherpur 4·02. The average population per village was 218. Taking the entire rural population of the district to be 100, they are distributed as follows:—In villages with a population of 2,000 to 5,000 only 3 per cent.; in villages of 500 to 2000, 29; and under 500, 68. It thus appears that the bulk of the rural population live in villages with a population of less than 500 souls. The average number of persons per house in

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the district was 5·9 in 1901, against 5·3 in 1891. The average number of houses per square mile was 105 in 1901, against 98 in 1891.

Migration. North Bengal, in which Bogrā is situated, is notable for the very small number of inhabitants who leave it, while it receives more immigrants than any other natural division, save only Central Bengal. This is explained by the sparseness of its population, especially in the north and the centre, the fertility of the soil, and the generally low rates of rent. Bogrā receives more people from Pābnā than it gives in return, but taking all contiguous districts together, the net gain is small. There is, however, a considerable immigration from Nadiā, Sāran, the Chota Nāgpur plateau and the United Provinces. The immigrants from Chota Nāgpur plateau, who are locally known as Bunās, are found mainly in Pānchbībī *thānā* which forms part of the Bārind. These Bunās have done excellent work in clearing the jungle and bringing under the plough large tracts of land not only in Pānchbībī, but also in the Adamdīghī *thānā*. A few of them have also started settling in Sherpur. These immigrants may be described as belonging to the class of permanent or semi-permanent immigrants, whereas the persons, who come to this district from Bihār and other neighbouring districts, belong to the periodic or temporary class Most of the latter work as coolies and do earthwork under the District Board and some even help the cultivators in harvesting their crops and tilling their lands. They generally arrive in the commencement of the cold weather, and disappear just before the rains set in. A small number of men, chiefly from Sāran, Darbhangā, and Muzaffarpur, work as domestic servants of the middle and upper classes, while others find employment as *barkandāzes* and *pāiks* of *zamīndārs*. Most of the ferry farmers, excise vendors, and constables, are also immigrants from Bihār and the North-West. The Mārwāri shopkeepers, locally known as *Kāiyāns*, come from Jeypur. According to the last census the total number of immigrants in the district amounted to 37,897 persons. On the other hand, 15,756 persons were shown to have emigrated from this district. It thus appears that out of every 10,000 of the inhabitants of the district, 443 were immigrants, 202 being from contiguous districts, and 241 being from outside; and out of every 10,000 persons born in the district, 173 had emigrated to contiguous districts, and only 11 to more distant places.

Religions. The three main religions of the district are Islām, Hinduism and Animism, the last name being applied to the somewhat vague and indeterminate beliefs of the aboriginal tribes, who are mostly the Santāls and Bunās coming from Chota Nāgpur, and the Meches and Koches of North Bengal. In the census of 1901, 699,185 of the population were returned as Musalmāns 154,131 as Hindus and 1,063 as Animists. The district of

Bogrā with about 82 per cent., has the greatest Musalmān population in the province. The percentage of Muhammadans to the total population at the different decades since 1872 were as follows:—

1872	...	...	...	80·7
1881	...	..	...	80·8
1891	...	...	...	80·8
1901	...	...	...	81·8

Of Hindus the percentage was 19·0 in 1872, 19·1 in 1881, 18·8 in 1891 and 18·0 in 1901. The percentage of Animists to the total population was found to be only 0·13 in 1901 against 0·26 in the previous census. This variation may be due to difficulty in obtaining a correct return of Animists. The term Animism embraces the various forms of belief of all the aboriginal tribes of India, who have not yet come under the influence of Hinduism, Muhammadanism or Christianity. There is no regular creed amongst these vague, unformulated beliefs, but there is none the less a considerable general inter-resemblance. The first difficulty in the way of correct enumeration was that the Animists themselves had no name for their religion, and the second that the dividing line between Hinduism and Animism was found to be uncertain. Even in the Santāl Parganās it is reported that "in some parts a good many Santāls have been entered as Hindu by religion." It is therefore not improbable that in places like Bogrā, which are far distant from their tribal head-quarters, Bunās and Santāls might call themselves Hindu, and get themselves entered in the census register as such. The Koch and other cognate tribes, such as Pālis, Rājbansis, etc., who are numerous in North Bengal, profess to be Hindus, but while they follow the Hindu religion in the main, they also practise some ceremonies borrowed from Musalmāns. It is most probable that almost the whole of these people have been returned as Hindus.

The increase in the number of the Muhammadan population has been entirely due to natural causes, for the number of converts to the Islāmic religion during this time has been so small as to be almost negligible. It would thus appear that the Musalmān of these parts, with his more varied and nutritious dietary, is more vigorous and virile than the Hindu. The number of ill-assorted marriages is not also so large amongst them, and the widows, instead of being confined to a life of sterility, not infrequently obtain a second husband.

Besides the Hindus, Muhammadans and Animists the last census showed 23 Brāhmos, 89 Jains, 2 Buddhists, and 40 Christians.

The Brāhmo Samāj was introduced into Bogrā in 1858 by Babu Krishna Kumar Sen, the second master of the Bogrā Government School Through his exertions it flourished during his stay, but declined three years afterwards, on his leaving Bogrā.

The Samāj does not appear to belong to any particular branch of the Brāhmo Samāj, but the great annual *Utsab* during Māgh is celebrated according to the ritual of the Sādhāran Samāj. A new *pakka* Samāj building has been recently constructed. Though the number of the professed Brāhmos in the district is very small, yet a large number of the more educated and socially advanced Hindus hold Theistic views on religion very similar to the Brāhmo faith.

Since 1905 an American Church Mission calling itself the "Church of God" mission has established itself in Bogrā, but up to now no converts have been made, although the mission is doing some very useful educational work.

Ethnical divisions.

If from the present we turn to the past to study the ethnology of the people we are confronted with considerable difficulty in consequence of the original ethnical divisions having been obliterated. As has been shown in a previous paragraph, this district was formerly divided into two portions by a river, which was one of the largest, if not the largest, in Eastern Bengal. There are still sufficient historical remains left to us to show that the two banks of this river were inhabited by two distinct peoples, governed by their own princes down to the twelfth century – the peoples of Hindu Bārendra and of the aboriginal kingdom of Kāmrupa. About that time the Musalmāns, chiefly of Afghān descent, obtained supremacy on the west bank of the Karatoyā, and the Hindu kings never again rose into power. The aboriginals on the east bank maintained their independence, though often defeated in battle during Muhammadan inroads. Indeed, there is little doubt that this eastern tract continued to be inhabited by Koches, and in part by Meches, down to the beginning of the sixteenth century. The sudden and extraordinary conversion of these people to the faith of Islām has been the subject of many disquisitions. The following passage from Mr. Beverley's Census Report of 1872 attempts to throw some light on it. "The policy of Hājo, who founded the Cooch Behār kingdom about A. D. 1500, was to coalesce with the Mech or Kāchāri tribes, so as to be able to oppose invasion by foreign races; but his grandson, Visu Sinh, is said to have apostatised to Hinduism, and this step was followed by all the people of condition. The country was named Behār, and the converts to Hinduism took the name of Bājbansi. The rest of the people, unable longer to tolerate the despised name of Koch, and being refused a decent status under the Hindu régime, mostly adopted Islām in preference to helot Hinduism." "Thus," adds Hodgson, from whom the above account is derived, "the mass of the Koch people became Muhammadans, and the higher grades Hindus. Both style themselves Rājbansis; a remnant only still endure the name of Koch." Mr. Beverley goes on to state that the Muhammadans at the present day do not call themselves Rājbansi, and observations in Bogrā of to-day bear out Mr. Beverley's remark.

The equally large proportion of Muhammadans to the west of the Karatoyā is due to the active proselytism of the Afghān *jāgirdārs*, who, after the establishment of Bengal as a Musalmān province in the thirteenth century, were settled on rent-free tenures along the new boundary of the empire towards the east, which ran from Dinājpur to Ghorāghāt down the western bank of the Karatoyā to near Nātor in Rājshāhi. In this way the followers of Hinduism disappeared from the whole west of the district of Bogrā, except where the jungles of Pānchbībī afforded them some shelter.

Origin of the local Musalmāns.

Recently attempts have been made to controvert the above opinion that the great bulk of Muhammadan population in Bogrā and North and East Bengal are Hindu converts, and it has been sought to establish that a large proportion of them are of foreign extraction. "But a consideration of the local distribution of the Muhammadans of Bengal," says Mr. Gait, "shows very clearly that foreign extraction cannot possibly account for the 25 millions of Muhammadans in Bengal. For, in Bihār, which first came under the Muhammadans, the Musalmān population is far smaller than in Bengal, and even in Bengal they are far less numerous in West than in East Bengal where the stream of immigration must have been comparatively attenuated." * The most convincing testimony, however, is that afforded by the anthropometrical researches carried on by Sir H. Risley. "The average cephalic index (proportion of breadth of head to length) of 185 Muhammadans of East Bengal is almost identical with that of 62 Chandāls. The nasal index (proportion of breadth of nose to height) of the Muhammadans, was greater than that of the Chandāls, but not very different to the Chandals' half-brothers the Pods. These measurements show clearly that the foreign element amongst the Muhammadans of East Bengal is very small, and although there had been no measurements of the Muhammadans of North Bengal, there seems no reason to doubt that if they could be taken they would fully confirm the popular view that for the most part they are closely allied to the Rājbansis amongst whom they live and whom they resemble in feature." †

According to the writer in the *Imperial Gazetteer*, the people of East Bengal belong to the Mongolo-Dravidian type, which is probably a blend of Dravidian and Mongoloid elements, with a strain of Indo-Aryan blood in the higher groups. The head is broad; complexion dark; hair on face usually plentiful; stature medium; nose medium.

As still another proof of a local origin of the Muhammadans of the district, we find here as in most of the districts of North-Eastern Bengal, which we know to have been peopled by the mixed races known as Koches, Meches, Bodos, and Dhimals, that the great mass of the lower population, though Musalmān, have not generally received the new designations, or surnames usually of Arabic or Persian origin, which the new religion introduced, in

* Gait's Census Report, Bengal, page 166.
† Gait's Census Report, Bengal, page 169.

other parts. There are few Shaikhs or Khāns, whilst the great majority are called by a common but hitherto unexplained name of Nasya. We also find that amongst the earlier converts, and especially in the functional groups, Hindu names and titles are still very common. Names, such as Kāli Shaikh, Kālā Chānda Shaikh, Braja Shaikh or Gopāl Mandal, are constantly met with.

Besides the numerous Koch Musalmān converts, we also still find quite a number of semi-Hindu Koch villages in this district principally in Bogrā police division, and along the frontier towards Dinājpur. It is believed that their inhabitants are settlers who fled westwards during the supremacy of the Assamese, after the latter under Chudampha conquered the native land of the Koches in the sixteenth century. Down to the present day they are evidently a distinct people, with features of a slightly Mongolian type, and retain customs known to have been characteristic of the Koch, Mech, and Bodo races, though these are overlaid by many Hindu forms. Tree-worship is common amongst them, particularly in the ceremony known as the *burīr-pūjā*, in which offerings of sugar and milk are made to the *sheorā* tree (*Trophis aspera*).

Muhammadan sects.

"The two main sects of Muhammadans are the Sunnis and the Shiās. The former accept the authority of all the successors of Muhammad, whereas the Shiās look upon the first three, Abu Bakr, Omār and Osmān, as interlopers and regard Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law, as the first true Khalifā. They also greatly reverence his martyred sons Hasan and Husain. The Sunnis are subdivided into four religious sects, called Hānafi, Hambali, Māliki and Shāfāi. It is believed that these names have been derived from the names of glossographers of the Hādis or the traditional sayings of Muhammad not included in the Korān. The difference between these sects is very slight, but the main characteristic of the Hānafis is that the traditions are freely interpreted in the light of the analogical reasoning, whereas the others take their stand against any modification of the actual words of Muhammad."*

The Muhammadans of this district are mostly Sunnis of the Hānafi sect, there being only very few Shiāhs.

"The Muhammadans of the Sunni congregation or Sunat Jamāat are divided into Rafāīdānīs and Adamrafā, according to the manner in which they pray. The Rafāīdānīs, as their name expresses, raise their hands in prayer to the level of the head, with the palms turned forwards. The Adamrafās hold the hands either clasped on the breast, as is the habit with Shāfīs, at the waist, as the Hānafī and Hambilī Sunnis do; or hanging by their sides, as is the manner of the Māliki Sunnis. The great doctrinal distinction between the Muhammadan sects in Bogrā is that which divides them into real Sunnis

* Gait's Census Report, Bengal, page 173.

and Wahābīs, or followers of the teachings of Maulvi Abdul Wahāb. All real Sunnis, whether Rafāīdānīs or Adamrafā, acknowledge Muhammad as the last and true prophet; and at the same time hold in equal respect the first four Khalifās or successors of Muhammad, namely Abu Bakr, Omār, Osmān and Alī. The Wahābīs, who were originally Hānafi Rafāidānī Sunnis, deny the authority of these Imāms; and, declaring that the Korān is a complete guide to spiritual life, call themselves Farāizīs, or followers of the Farāiz (plural of the Arabic word *farz*), the divine ordinances of God alone."*

Spread of Wahābi doctrines.

Almost simultaneously with the spread of the Wahābi doctrines in the North-West and Bihar by Saiad Ahmad Shah of Rai Bareilli (1826) and his disciple Maulvi Muhammad Ismāil, a similar movement was in progress, in East Bengal, originated by Hājī Shariatullā of Faridpur, who returned from Mecca about 1820 A. D., and whose work was carried on after him by his son Dudhu Miyān. Amongst other things, Hājī Shariatullā prohibited the performance of Hindu rites, and the joining in Hindu religious ceremonies, the preparation of *Tāziās* and the praying to Pīrs. Since Dudhu Miyān's death his sect has been gradually dwindling in numbers and are now greatly outnumbered by the followers of Karāmat Ali, except perhaps in Faridpur and Bogrā in which latter district the sect is small but growing. The propagation of these two new doctrines frequently leads to much ill-feeling between the adherents of the different sects, and there is often danger of a breach of the peace. An occurrence of this nature is reported to have taken place in Bogrā in the year 1900. But Wahābism spread to this district at a much earlier date. During the Wahābī State trials it transpired that Bogrā and Mālda, specially the former, supplied most of the Bengali recruits. Collections of money to a considerable amount were made in Bogrā and not a few men of position were, and still are, Wahābis. In 1871 there was a State prosecution of some minor Wahābis in this district, but no convictions were obtained.

Unreformed Muhammadans.

Besides the *dindār* or orthodox Sunnis, there is a fairly large class of degraded followers of the Islām in the district, who are known as *be-dīns*, meaning irreligious or unreformed sects. They refuse to join the rank of any reforming organisation and are loath to give up the old rites and ceremonies. Thus they indulge in the ceremonies of the *tāziā*, in music, in offering *shirni* to shrines of the saints, and even in joining the Hindus in offering tribute to the village godlings. A curious ceremony of marrying girls to a bamboo called Ghāzi Miyān is described in the last *Gazetteer*, but it is reported that this practice has long ceased and is now confined to the performance of several preliminary rites without the solemnization of any marriage properly so called. The Sub-Registrar of Akkelpur reports that the ceremony has entirely disappeared from Khetlāl.

* Hunter's Statistical Account of Bogrā, p. 182.

Murshids.

There are several families of Murshids known as Diwans who serve as religious preceptors. With the exception of a very few, they are ignorant of anything contained in the Korān. Now and then they utter *baids* (sentences from the Korān), but very often they are ignorant of the meaning of what they say. Here and there a few learned Maulvis can be met with, but they are scarcely recognised as religious preceptors, unless they come from a Murshid family.

Famous shrines of Pirs.

The adoration of departed Pīrs (saints) is a form of worship, common amongst the Muhammadans, but is not based on the Korān. The following shrines are the best known in the district:—

1. The *dargāh* of Shāh Sultān at Mahāsthān. The legends relate how the Shāh, by the help of his miraculous powers, conquered Parasurām, the last Hindu King of Mahāsthān. A fair is held at the *dargāh* every year and is attended by large numbers, both of Hindus and Muhammadans.
2. In the town of Bogrā the tomb of Fateh-āli Shāh, who lived about a century ago, is respected by both the Muhammadans and Hindus and receives offerings of cakes from them.
3. The *Lengtā* Pīr's *dargāh* at Sonāmukhī is credited with miraculous virtues, and offerings are given to it by both Muhammadans and Hindus.
4. The tomb of Pīr Shohākāla at Kashbā receives similar marks of respect from Muhammadans and Hindus alike.
5. At Adamdīghi the *dargāh* of Bābā Adam is very popular among the people of the locality, and commands as much respect from Hindus as from Muhammadans. He is said to have been a contemporary of the famous Rāni Bhawāni of Nātor who, it is said, with her characteristic magnanimity had a tank dug at the place and dedicated it to the saintly *fakir*, in honour of his supernatural powers. The tank which is a large one still bears the name of the *fakir*.
6. At Shāhāpur in the Jaipur Government Estates, cakes are offered on Thursdays and Sundays at the Diwan Sāhib's *dargāh*.

All the tombs are credited with more or less supernatural powers.

Hindu sects.

The Hindus of the district are, like those of the rest of Bengal, divided into the two principal sects of Sāktas and Vaishnavas, the former being however greatly in the majority. Sāktism is based on the worship of the active producing principle (Prakriti), as manifested in one or other of the goddess wives of Siva (Durgā, Kāli, Pārvati), the female energy or Sakti of the primodial male, Purusha, or Siva. The higher castes like Brāhmans, Baidyas and Kāyasthas are mostly of the Sākta

persuasion. Vaishnavism was preached in Bengal by Chaitanya, who was born in Nabadvip in A.D. 1484. Chaitanya ignored caste, preached against the immolation of animals in sacrifice, and taught that the true road to salvation lay in *Bhakti*, or fervent devotion to God. The largest number of adherents of Vaishnavism in the district are to be found amongst race castes, the Kaibarttas and Chandāls and the Subarnabaniks.

Hindu Religious festivals.

The greatest religious festival of the Sākta Hindus is the Durgā *pūjā* in Aswin (September or October), which is still celebrated in the houses of many of the well-to-do orthodox Hindus, in towns like Bogrā and Sherpur. But whether there is a *pūjā* or not, the occasion is one of universal rejoicing and peace-making in every Hindu home. Kāli *pūjā*, Jagatdhātri *pūjā*, Saraswati *pūjā*, Dol Jātrā and Rath Jātrā are the other principal religious festivals of the Hindus. It is needless to describe these festivals here, for they are common sights all over Bengal.

The following extracts from a report on some "Aspects of popular Hinduism in Bogrā" by Babu Annadānanda Sen, Manager, Jaipur Government Estates, will not be out of place. "It is somewhat interesting to note," says the Manager, "the hybrid character of popular Hinduism in this district, how the Aryan ideas of religion have got blended with those peculiar to non-Aryans. The various forms in which the goddess Kāli is worshipped as Bāns Kāli, Pānthār Kāli, etc., will illustrate this. Bāns Kāli presides over a bamboo grove, and is worshipped by Brāhman priests, but no idol is required. Pānthār Kāli is worshipped in an open field, the object being to guard against any harm coming to young folk in the shape of a visitation from an evil spirit. Jaleswari Kāli presides over water. Marak Kāli is the presiding deity of epidemics. Alms are collected by women when necessary for worship of the goddess. Goats are sacrificed as usual."

"Besides the above forms of Kāli-worship, the goddess is sometimes worshipped in obedience to an *ādesh* or call. The *ādesh* is a mandate from the goddess to worship her under a particular tree, which she declares to be her favourite resort. The time when she has to be worshipped also forms a part of the dream. Besides goats, pigs are also sacrificed to this goddess by Hāris and Chandāls, who are among her votaries."

"The Dhelā Chandi, Chota Pīr, and Nengtā Pīr, are deities who inhabit trees, and the respective trees concerned form the object of worship. The passer-by has to throw a *dhelā* (clod of earth) when passing by the tree of Dhela Chandi; he has to hang a small twig on the bough of the tree of Chota Pīr; and to tie a piece of rag or a thread on to a branch of the tree of Nengtā Pīr. Hindus and Muhammadans alike follow these superstitious practices."

"The Jhapri Pūjā is a curious instance of village worship, the worshippers in this case being girls and the ceremony very similar

to the Kumāri *pūjā* of East Bengal. A plantain tree is planted and the figure of a god made of mud is placed under it. The god, who is called Jhapri Gosāin, is worshipped by young unmarried girls at evening, every day, during the month of Chaitra."

"The goddess Manasā is worshipped here, as in other parts of Bengal, at the time of Ambubāchi in Ashār. Hindu widows are forbidden to touch fire or take any cooked food during the three days of her worship, and the cultivators (*chāshās*) do not dig the earth or plough the ground during these days, as the earth is supposed to be in her menses during this time. A particularly interesting ceremony relating to the snake-goddess Manasā is observed among the lower classes of people in this district, chiefly by the Bunās in Pānchbībi. The festival is known as the Khora *pūjā*. Manasā is worshipped under a plantain tree and a preliminary ceremony known as *bish upājān* (transferring poison from one place to another) has to be performed. It is believed that by the incantations of the worshippers, poison is transferred from a snake into the plantain tree."

Hindu castes. Hindu castes are fewer in this district than in most, in consequence of the great predominance of Muhammadans, and individual castes are often represented by very small numbers. The Musalmān religion has attracted to itself more than 80 per cent. of the population, and of the remainder, the greater majority, some 15 per cent. of the whole population, are semi-Hinduised aboriginals or Hindus of the very lowest classes. The following list of Hindu castes has been arranged in groups, according to the classification adopted in the last *Gazetteer*. Brief ethnographic notes have been made against the more important castes, and their local distribution in the district has also been noted.

Brāhmans. Brāhmans were found to be 5,033 in number at the last census and stand without cavil on the top rung of the social ladder.

Few in the district are actually engaged in the ministration of religion, though quite a large proportion have *Brahmottar* lands for their support and some also act as *purohits* and have their own special family of *jajmāns* (clients). All the three main classes of pure Brāhmans, *viz.*, the Rārhi, the Bārendra and the Vaidik, are found in the district, but the largest number are Bārendras. The Sherpur Munshi Bābus and other *zamīndārs* of Sherpur and Adamdīghi are Bārendra Brāhmans. The family names of the principal Bārendra Brāhman families in Bogrā are Sānyāl, Maitra, Bāgchi, Bhāduri, and Lāhiri, residing in the south-west of the district at Sherpur, and at Ujulta and Chhatiāngrām, in Adamdīghi.

Two peculiar classes of semi-hermit celibate Brāhmans are found in this district, known as Giri Gosāins and Kānphāthā Jogis. The former are represented by some wealthy *zamīndārs* of Sherpur. They are said to have belonged originally to the Dravidian division of Brāhmans, but now keep up their line by adoption from any of the septs of Bengali Brāhmans. The two present

representatives are Gaur Brāhmans, but their predecessor was a Rārhi. They used to wear as little clothing as sufficed to cover their nakedness, artificially matted their hair, and even now cast away the *paitā* or sacred Brāhmanical thread on joining their new life. The Kānphāthā Jogis are so called from having a large hole bored in the lobe of each ear, and are represented in this district by the priests of the ancient shrine of Jogir Bhuban. The Kānphāthās profess to be followers of Gorakhnāth. The slitting of the ear is practised during the ceremony of induction. They wear *geruā vastra* or reddish cloth. The Kānphāthās used to carry in their hands a *mor-chhal*, or fan made of peacock's feathers, with which they made passes over the credulous for the purpose of exorcising evil spirits by which they may be possessed, and keeping imps and goblins at a distance. At death, the Kānphāthās are buried in their own houses.

Castes above Sūdras.

Kshattriya, Chhattri or Rājput.—The Kshattriya caste of the census returns is believed to be a section of the trading caste of Western Hindustan. The Rājputs, who claim to be of the Kshattriya caste, are shown in the census of 1872, as numbering 3,426; 4,618 in 1891, and only 762 in 1901. Either the previous censuses have over-estimated this caste or some of them have been included under some other head in the census of 1901.

Baidya, the hereditary physicians or *kabirāj* of the Hindus. Many other castes have now encroached on their profession, and they themselves have turned to other callings, being found largely as Government servants, schoolmasters and clerks. They number 260 in this district, and live almost entirely towards the south, in the police divisions of Bogrā and Sherpur. The Baidyas claim to be placed next to the Brāhmans in social precedence, on the ground that they are identical with the Ambasthas of the *Shāstras* and so are descended from Dhanvantari, the son of a Brāhman father and a Vaisya mother, at a time when marriages with women of lower castes were legal, and it was held that the offspring occupied a position intermediate between that of the parents, but inclining rather to that of a father on account of the superiority of the seed over the soil.

Kāyastha, the great writer caste, of uncertain origin. They claim descent on the father's side from Brāhmans, but the latter repudiate the connection. Wilson in his Glossary states that they sprung from a Kshattriya father and a Vaisya mother, but gives no authority for the statement. According to some of the Kāyasthas, the Baidya as a mixed or *barnasankar* caste hold a much lower position. They also deny that the Baidyas are identical with the Ambasthas of the *Shāstras*, and urge that if they were a genuine survival they would not be confined to Bengal proper, but would also be found in the great strongholds of Hinduism. Kulin Kāyasthas, who were rare in Bogrā, are now more largely represented there being about 15 to 20 families settled at Sibbāti and other villages. The Maulik sept is better represented. They

are employed, as in other districts, as Government and *zamīndāri* clerks. The inferior Kāyasthas are most largely represented in Bogrā, the prevailing family names being Dhar, Dām, Chāki, Nandi, Dās and Deb. They reside chiefly at Govindapur in Adamdīghī police circle, and at Chhātuyā in Sibganj police circle. It is observable that nearly all the higher class Hindus live in the south and south-west of the district, there being very few in the east. The total number of Kāyasthas in Bogrā is 3,802.

In the same group are included the trading castes of Agarwālās of whom there are 266, and the Oswāls (a Baniyā caste) of whom there are only 24 in the town of Bogrā.

Pure Sūdra castes.

Next in rank come the nineteen pure Sūdra castes, the sign of their position being that a Brāhman may take water from a vessel handed to him by a member of any of them. Originally these pure Sūdra functional and professional castes were only nine in number, as is expressed by their distinctive name, *nabasāks*. Which were the original nine castes, it is a little difficult to ascertain, different groups being recognised in different districts as forming that number. The great addition to the number of castes received as pure in this district is probably due to the condition of common subjection, with its attendant degradation, to which all Hindu castes were equally reduced in Musalmān times, and which tended much to break down the barrier that an exclusive Hindu society would recognise and perpetuate.

First come the Nāpits (4,434), the Kāmār or Lohār (2,034), the Kumār (potters) (3,967), the Sadgop (347) a cultivating caste, the Gandhabaniks (308) a division of the Baniyās, the Kānsāris (brazier and coppersmiths) (151), and Madaks or Mairās (1,293). Then there are 4,330 Goālās, or milkmen and cowherds. Of this caste it has been said, "if there is any value in Manu's division of classes, the Goālās should by their occupation be Vaisyas, whereas they only claim to be pure Sudras, and even that honour is not generally allowed them". In the north-eastern districts of Bengal, as in Orissa, this claim is admitted. They reside mostly at Chelopārā, Durgāhātā, and Hātibāndā, in the police division of Bogrā, at Hāsakhāli in Shariākāndi, and at Elangi in the Dhunot *thānā* and at Sherpur in the police division of Sherpur. The Telis were originally oil-pressers and sellers by caste occupation, who having made money by that trade, have abandoned it and become grain merchants and general traders, or have risen to the higher position of landed proprietors. They have succeeded in getting recognition as a clean caste and eschew the hereditary name (functional) in favour of Tili. In the last census the total number for Telis and Tilis has been shown separately from the total number of Tilis alone. Under the former head 1,596 individuals have been shown and under the latter, 1,096. Kaibarttas are divided into two sections, Hālīyā or Chāsi, and Jāliyā. The most vigorous of all the agitations that arose in connection with the caste question was

that of the Chāsi (cultivating) Kaibarttas. They urge that they are entirely distinct from the Jāliyā (fishing) Kaibarttas and that their proper appellation is Māhisya, an ancient caste of much respectability, which is said to be descended from a Kshattriya father and a Vaisya mother. The Chāsi Kaibarttas claim to be Māhisyas on the ground that they have the same origin, and quoted verses from the *Padma Purāna* and the *Brahma Vaivartta Purāna* in support of this claim, but by many the verses are considered to be spurious, and there seems to be no room for doubt as to the common origin of the two sections of the Kaibarttas. A Brāhman will drink water from the hands of a Hāliyā Kaibartta. A Chaudhuri, one of the wealthiest *zamindārs* in Pānchbībī, belongs to this caste. Their total number is 14,122 of whom the Chāsis number 9,949 and Jāliyā 4,173. Tāntis and Tatwa, are weavers of silk and fine cloth. The great importance of silk cultivation and manufacture in Bogrā as in the neighbouring districts, during Musalmān and early English times, gave a position to the weavers of this part of Bengal which they have not obtained elsewhere. The Tāntis now number 2,209, being most numerous in Adamdīghi.

Intermediate Sūdra castes.

Then follows a group of nine castes, which though considered impure, are not despised, and have some claim to respectability, particularly if they have enough money to conciliate the higher castes. Amongst these are the Sonārs or Swarnakārs and Subarnabaniks, an offshoot of the Baniyā caste. The Chāsā Dhobās were formerly washermen, to whom the profession of agriculture has now given a higher position; 45 in number The Sutradhar, or carpenter caste is so called from the thread, *sutra*, with which they mark out their work. This caste numbered 1,286 in 1901. The great majority of the carpenters in Bogrā are Musalmāns. The Shāhā is not properly a separate caste but the title of the more respectable members of the Sunri caste, which is ordinarily considered entirely impure. Considering that most of the rice trade of the district is in the hands of members of this caste, and that many of them are merchants of considerable wealth, it is only natural that the Shāhās of Bogrā should claim some respectability. Their number cannot be given, as in the Census Statement they are not distinguished from the Sunris.

Low castes.

Then come the lowest castes of the Hindus, and though most particular about their caste distinctions amongst themselves, are despised by the superior classes. Amongst these are the Jugis, or weavers, remarkable amongst Hindus for burying their dead; 3,318 in number. The Sunris are wine-sellers by caste, but many have become petty traders in country produce, and brokers for the grain and oilseed exporters, some follow husbandry as a profession. They number, including Shāhās 4,278. Dhobās or washermen, 1,114 in number are in this group. All the castes engaged in the fishing and boating industry, including Tiyars, Māl, Mālo, Mākali, and Mānjhis, who altogether number something like 6,000 souls, are also in this group.

Semi-Hinduised aboriginals.

Then there are the semi-Hinduised aboriginals. Koches are found in this district mostly in the police division of Pānchbībī, on the borders of Dinājpur. They can be distinguished from all other Bengalis by their broad faces, flat noses, and projecting cheek-bones, and also by their appearance and different styles of dress. They profess to be Hindus, but while they follow the Hindu religion in the main, they also practise some ceremonies borrowed from Musalmāns, and others which are apparently remnants of an older superstition. In describing the ethnical divisions of the people, reference has been made to this people as the probable aboriginals of this part of Bengal. They are ordinary cultivators, labourers, and preparers of *chirā* and *khai* from rice. They number 30,245, excluding the greater number of them who joined Islām and including the Rājbansis who are the Koches who first accepted Hinduism and took their sounding title at the time. Though in the present census the figures for the Koches and Rājbansis have been amalgamated, yet there is little reason to doubt that the Rājbansis of Rangpur at least have no connection with the Koches and that the two communities spring from entirely different sources. The Rājbansis appear to be a Dravidian tribe allied to the Tiyars and they probably owned the name long before the Mongoloid Koch kings rose to power. Their religion is also different. The Koch worships Siva and eats pork, while the Rājbansi is usually a Vaishnava and eschews unclean food.

The Namasūdras, or Chandāls, are one of the great race castes of East Bengal. Another race caste living to the further west of them being the Pods. The full strength of these two castes in Eastern Bengal is concealed by the fact that large numbers have been converted to Muhammadanism and now call themselves Shaikhs. The ethnic characteristics of this race are in the main Mongoloid. It probably entered North Bengal by way of the Brahmaputra Valley and ruled there, until it was pushed southwards by a second invasion of the Koch and other Mongoloid tribes from the same direction. The Chandāls are now cultivators and fishermen, and are 7,901 in number. They are found mostly in the east and south of the district.

The Hāris, or swine-herds and sweepers, are 4,883 in number. They form a large class in Bogrā and Pānchbībī police divisions, the extensive jungles in the latter affording capital feeding ground for their swine, which they export to Calcutta. *Bunā* is not the name of a distinct caste, but the appellation applied to the western hill people as a body, who come from the Santāl Parganās to Lower Bengal in search of work. It is probably a corruption of the name of their largest tribe, Bhuiyā. In Bogrā, the Bunās include Rājwārs, Baraiks, Bhuiyās and Ghātwāls. They number 1,863, and are most numerous on the Pānchbībī clearings. The Chamār and Muchi are two distinct castes, related to one another by the similarity of the profession, shoemaking and

leather-dressing, rather than by any race affinity. The Chamārs come from up-country, a large number from Dinājpur being settled at Dhupchānchiā. They are the more numerous of the two castes, which together number 1,873, more than two-thids of whom reside in Sherpur police division. The Bāgdis are fishermen, palanquin-bearers, and labourers and are 922 in number, almost all in police division, Sherpur. The caste gave its name to, or received it from, the old division of Ballāl Sen's kingdom, known as Bāgdi or South Bengal. Mr. Batavyal was of opinion that the Bāgdis were brought to Bogrā in recent times to help the indigo-planters in their factory work. Their original home was the uplands of the Rārhdesha, and even in historical times there was a ruling chief of this race in Bishunpur. The Bediyās are a well-known wandering and gipsy-tribe in Lower Bengal, with Hindu affinities, who are noted thieves and burglars. In spite of the similarity of name, it appears that the Bediyās of this district are a distinct tribe, being a class of Musalmāns, better known as Bāramāsiās, from living the twelve (*bāra*) months (*mās*) of the year in boats. This manner of life is preserved by no less a sanction than absolute loss of caste for any member of the tribe who is found on shore after the jackals begin to cry. They number 740, and are found chiefly in the rivers of the Sherpur and Shariākāndi *thānās*. Their ostensible means of livelihood is petty trade in bead-bangles and other miscellaneous articles which suit the taste of the villagers. But they are still suspected as being given to thefts and burglaries and their movements have therefore to be carefully watched by the police.

The Muhammadans recognize two main social divisions: (1) Ashrāf or Sharīf, and (2) Ajlāf, which in Bengali has been corrupted to Atrāp. The first, which means 'noble', includes all descendants of foreigners and converts from the higher castes of Hindus. Amongst the Ashrāfs, the first place in the social system is held by the Saiads, just as does the Brāhman amongst the Hindus. The Saiads numbered 2,136 in the district at the last census. The Shaikhs under which category have been shown no less than 668,820 Musalmāns of the district, also claim to be Ashrāfs, but there can be no doubt that the majority of them in this district are really converts from low Hindu castes, and therefore properly belong to the Ajlāf class. The Pathāns, of whom there are 2,960 in this district, and the Mughals 59 in number, are also generally classed as Ashrāfs. All other Muhammadans including the functional groups such as Jolāhās (weavers), Dhuniās (cotton-carders), Kulus (oil-pressers), Darzis (tailors) and the like, and all converts of lower rank are collectively known by the contemptuous term Ajlāf, or "mean people". The Jolāhās number 12,559 and the Kulus 9,653 in this district. Muhammadan social divisions.

The mean age of males calculated on 100,000 of population for North Bengal, which includes Bogrā, has remained practically stationary since 1881. It was 24·3 for 1881, 24·1 for 1891 and Age and sex.

23·8 for 1901. This comparative lowness of the mean age and its slight decline in the last census are in part due to the unhealthiness of most parts of North Bengal, which reduces the average longevity of the people, and also to the high birth-rate which raises the proportion of children.

The last census showed 437,349 males of all religions to 417,184 females. The number of females to each thousand males of the natural population of the district was 1,003 in 1881, 999 in 1891, and 967 in 1901. Thus a slight tendency towards the rise of the male population is noticeable in the later decades.

Marriage and civil condition. The most striking fact is the universality of marriage. Out of every 1,000 males in the district, 485 are married, 480 unmarried and 35 widowed. But of every 1,000 females, 485 are married, 358 unmarried and 157 widowed. A reference to the age details shows that more than four-fifths of the unmarried males were under 15 years of age. The figures for the females are still more striking. Only just over one-third of the population is unmarried, and of these practically the entire number was below 15 years of age. The total number of unmarried females for ages above 15 was only 6 out of every 1,000 of population. In the case of males for every 1,000 of the population there are 68 unmarried for ages above 15.

In the eyes of the Hindus marriage is a religious sacrament, essential and irrevocable. A man must marry in order to beget a son, who may perform his funeral ceremony, rescue his soul and the souls of his ancestors from hell. With the Muhammadans marriage is a civil contract rather than a religious sacrament. Early marriage is the rule amongst the Hindus and the practice is the same with the Muhammadan, although in theory a Muhammadan girl when married should be of an age capable of giving her consent. Out of a thousand of the male Hindu population of the district, six were married under the age of 10 in 1881, the same number in 1891, but 12 in 1901. The corresponding figures for females were 95 in 1881, 68 in 1891 and 59 in 1901. For the Muhammadan males the figures were 11 in 1881, 8 in 1891, and 12 in 1901. For Musalmān females the corresponding figures were 106 for 1881, 75 for 1891 and 57 for 1901. It thus appears that the marriageable age of girls amongst Musalmāns and Hindus is about the same, and that there is a tendency amongst both communities for the marriageable age of girls to slowly rise.

The general rule amongst the Hindus is that a man should content himself with one wife, and should not marry a second, unless the first is barren or afflicted with incurable disease. Thus we find at the last census there were 32,114 wives to 41,289 husbands amongst the Hindus. The apparent excess of husbands being no doubt due to the great number of Hindu immigrants, many of whom are married men, but who have left their wives at home. But even allowing for this, it is clear that amongst the Hindus monogamy must be the general rule, and polygamy the

exception. A Muhammadan may marry as many as four wives, but, as a rule, contents himself with one. According to the last census the number of married Muhammadan males was 170,317 against 169,870 wives. Judging, however, from my experience of the district, the accuracy of the above figures appears to be a little doubtful ; for a Muhammadan with more than one wife is more the rule than the exception.

The re-marriage of widows is forbidden by the Hindu religion, and amongst the highest classes the prohibition is strictly enforced. Thus we find that out of a total Hindu female population of 70,589, the number of widows was 16,174, or in other words the widows were just less than one-fourth of the total female population. Amongst Muhammadans it is the almost universal practice for a widower to marry again, unless he is already advanced in life. Widows are comparatively few amongst Muhammadans, but they still number 49,396 or nearly one-sixth of the total female Musalmān population. Again we find that amongst a thousand Hindus there were, between the ages of 15 and 40, 36 widowers and 204 widows at the last census. The corresponding figures for the Musalmān population stood at 29 widowers and 104 widows. The noteworthy points in the above figures are the great disparity between the number of widowed males and females amongst both Hindus and Muhammadans, and the much greater preponderance of widowed females amongst the Hindus when compared with their Musalmān sisters.

The daily life of a villager of Bogrā is not very different from that of his brother Musalmān agriculturist in other parts of East Bengal. Though less pugnacious and perhaps less virile than the Musalmāns of Barisāl for instance, they are more permeated with religious zeal, and there is more of a feeling of unity amongst them, than is to be found amongst the Hindu villagers. A good deal of neighbourly feeling, however, generally prevails amongst the Hindu and Musalmān peasants of the district. The *zamīndārs* are mostly Hindus, and the local officers of the *zamīndārs* even when the *zamīndār* is himself a follower of Islām (as for instance, the Nawāb of Bogrā and Shāh Nāzim Ud-din Abul Husain) are mostly Hindus. But seldom is such good feeling to be seen between landlords and tenants, as exists almost universally in this little district. In spite of the existence of a fairly large number of Farāizis, the majority of the Musalmāns still take part in all Hindu festivals, fairs, etc., and during the Muharram the Hindus enjoy themselves and are as conspicuous in the processions as the Musalmāns themselves.

Social life.

The same patient toil, combined with the same thriftlessness and want of foresight, and the same proneness to be led into mischievous litigations by the advice of interested parties, mark the life of the peasant here as in other parts of Bengal. Communal life, though undergoing a process of disintegration, is still a reality in the villages, and in all social ceremonials and petty differences

the decision of the *Pānch* has all the sanction of unwritten law. But perhaps the *goendā* or *diwāniā* (village tout) which office is sometimes filled by the village *Pradhān* himself, exercises a much more potent sway over the daily life of these peasants of Central Bengal districts than is the case elsewhere. Education is advancing amongst the masses, but the day seems to be yet far off when the villager will be able both to understand and guard his own interests. Yet in spite of the presence of evil advisers the people are not so litigious as in some of the more eastern districts of the province, and although professional witnesses, who will depose to anything for money are not uncommon, cases of deep-laid plots and diabolical ingenuity rarely find their way to the courts.

Boys and girls amongst both Hindus and Muhammadans are married early, and although the practice of marrying the same girl successively to more than one husband for money is not uncommon amongst the Muhammadans, yet the standard of sexual morality is reported to be improving. The seclusion of women of both Hindu and Muhammadan communities, is far less rigorous in villages than in towns; and amongst the lower classes, the women do almost as much of the work of the fields as do the men. In point of cleanliness and as regards the comforts of their dwelling houses, the *rāiyats* of Bengal compare very favourably with the *rāiyats* of Orissa and Bihār, and some of the huts of the Bogrā *rāiyats*, with their clean thatched roofs and gray clay-smeared walls, cloistered in the shade of the graceful areca and the shady mango and jack, look the very picture of peace and repose. Indeed, although signs of vigorous life and enterprise are absent from these villages, squalor and abject poverty are also equally absent. Besides the seasonal fairs and festivals, and the festivities connected with marriages and other social ceremonies, nothing ever happens to break the dull monotony of village life. But the people are cheerful, and they have not the same weary and a pre-occupied look of the average Bengal peasants, perhaps because their fields are more fertile and their crops are more certain, than is the case in less favoured parts of the province. The people of the district are reported to be averse to leaving their homes in search of employment elsewhere, and there appears to be a total lack of industrial enterprise. It cannot be said, however, that they are altogether impervious to all influences of progress, for the recent advance made in the education of girls is phenomenal.

Life in the towns and the larger villages, of course, is somewhat different. Public interests, the duties of citizenship, and organized social amusements may be said to have some share in the daily life of the average educated citizen of Bogrā. Here also the harmony in the relations of the Hindus and Muhammadans is very striking. The pleaders, who are as usual the most influential body in the district, are sagacious and practical men, and during the recent political agitations connected with the partition of

the old Province of Bengal were singular in realizing that the school-boys are not the best custodians of the political aspirations of the people. There is a Public Library, a People's Club, and a Theatre Hall where the local amateur Dramatic Society, called "The Edward Dramatic Association," which comprises several Government officials, act Bengali plays and thus afford excellent amusement for the public. There are no journals published in the district, but there are two or three political societies and one literary association called Bagurā Sāhitya Samiti. As was noticed in a recent administration report of the district, the birth of public opinion amongst the Muhammadans has been the most noticeable outcome of the creation of the New Province, and the leaders of that community are exercising their influence in advancing education and culture amongst their co-religionists.

Out of every 10,000 of population of the district, 9,938 speak languages of the Aryan Family, 54 of the Mundā Family, 6 of the Dravidian Family, one of the Tibeto-Burman Family and one speaks other language. Again out of a 10,000 of population 9,794 speak Bengali, 142 Hindi, one Oriya, and 63 other languages. Thus Bengali is the language of over 95 per cent. of the people. The dialect spoken is what is known as Northern Bengal of the Eastern Branch. "The standard of the Northern dialect of Bengal," says Dr. Grierson, "may be taken to be the form of the language, which is spoken in the district of Dinājpur, but the form of the dialect spoken in Bogrā differs very little from that of Dinājpur." To the south in Rājshāhi and Pābnā it more nearly approaches the standard dialect of Central Bengal. The Northern dialect is spoken in the districts of Rājshāhi, Dinājpur, Bogrā and Pābnā. The whole of this tract has within historic times been subject to Koch tribes and members of this tribe still exist in each district. They were originally reported as speaking their original Koch language, but on an examination of the specimens of the language, Dr. Grierson found that they have given up their original speech, and now only speak a more or less corrupt variety of Northern Bengali. According to Dr. Grierson's calculation 740,807 persons speak Northern Bengali in Bogrā. Language.

He notices the following points regarding this form of the dialect: "The system of spelling and pronunciation closely follows that of Central Bengal, the more contracted forms of the verbal conjugation being, as a rule, followed. Here and there we meet the letter *l* used instead of *r*, as in the word *Sarīlē*, for *Sarīrē*, in the body."

"As regards vocabulary note the use of the word *tābat*, the Sanskrit *tāvat*, to mean "everything".

"In the declension of nouns, there is a locative singular in *ēt* or *at*. Examples are:—*kashtēt*, in trouble. The nominative plural sometimes takes the same form as that of the instrumental singular. Thus, *chhāōyālē*, pronounced *chhāwālē*, children. Besides the usual genitive plural ending in *dēr*, for *digēr*, as in *bēsādēr*, of harlots, there is a similarly contracted accusative-dative plural,

as in *chākardēk*, to the servants; *bandhudēk*, friends. In the pronouns also, it will be seen that there is a tendency to drop the final *ē* of the accusative-dative termination *kē*. For the district of Bogrā the following peculiarities may be noted :—*bā*, a father; *turi*, even thine; *mērō* we; and especially the curious verbal forms, *kartitēchhi*, I am doing; *khāttitēchhi*, I am working; *kartutuchhu*, thou art making; and *kartitichhē*, he is making."*

The author of the *Bagurār Shetihāsh* gives a list of words peculiar to the district, most of which however appear to belong to the dialect prevalent in Eastern Bengal generally. We may notice, however, the use of *miā* for *mee* (girl), *chark* for *bajra* (thunder), *dopā* for *garta* (a hole), *pākhi* for *bighā*, *fotā* for *urāni* (chudder). †

Literature. The contribution of this district to Bengali literature is, as might have been expected, comparatively insignificant. But it is interesting to note that of the numerous Bengali versions of the *Rāmāyana*, the authorship of one is attributed to a resident of this district named Nityānanda, whose pseudonym was Advutāchārjya, as he is supposed to have written his *Rāmāyana* through divine inspiration. The author is described in contemporary works as a resident of a village known as Barabariā or Subernapuri to the north of the Atrāi and west of the Karatoyā. In this work Sitā is represented as an *avatār* of Kāli. The author flourished some time after Kirttibās in the 15th century. The work, which is a metrical composition is written in the dialect of North Bengal, with peculiarities special to Bogrā, Rājshāhi and Mālda. The next name we come across is that of one Durgatiā Sarkār Sāheb, a Musalmān resident of Mahicharan village. His work, also in verse, was called *Emām Jātrār Puthi* and is a religious treatise. It is curious, however, that the Muhammadan writer has an ode to "Saraswati," the Hindu goddess of learning, in his book. The next work is Sanskrit commentary of the well-known Sanskrit grammar "*Sarswat*" by one Rāmnārayan Bhattāchārjya of Baran, a village in Dhupchānchiā *thānā*. Some time in the 17th century, during the Vaishnava period, one Kabi Ballav of Arorā village, near Mahāsthān, wrote a book in verse called "*Rasakadamba*." The work is specially devoted to describing the religious faith of the Sahajiā sect of Vaishnavs. Lastly, reference has already been made to the "*Bagurār Shetihāsh*," (History of Bogrā) written by Kāli Kamal Sārbavauma, a teacher of the local school, and published in 1861. The book is unique in being an attempt by a literary man to describe the history of his own times in a colloquial style. The district does not appear to have supplied any names to the roll of the Bengali authors of recent times.

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* Dr. Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. V., Indo- Ayan Family, Part I (pages 120 and 155).

† Page 20, *Bagurār Shetihāsh*.

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

Health—Past and present.

In the *Shetihāsh* of Bogrā published in the year 1861, to which reference has already been made, it is stated that in those days, fever, phthisis, morbid growth of flesh at the angular point of the ribs, hydrocele and goitre were the principal diseases in the district. These diseases are said to have been very obstinate, and people once attacked with them hardly ever survived. Quacks were then the only medical advisers available. Cases of cholera or small-pox appear to have been very rare. Even in 1872, according to the last *Gazetteer*, an improvement in the health of the district was noticeable owing to the clearing of jungle, and on account of the *rāiyats* being better fed than before. There has been further improvement in the public health within recent years, due chiefly to the clearing of jungle, better sanitation, more extensive use of well water, the opening up of the district in different directions by the construction of roads and bridges, and other improvements; and judged both by its medical statistics and the opinion of the natives of the country, Bogrā is now the healthiest district in the Rājshāhi Division.

The healthiest months of the year are February to August, and the heaviest mortality is recorded during the autumn and the cold-weather months after the cessation of the rains. The healthiest parts of the district are those bordering the Brahmaputra and the Bāngāli rivers in *thānās* Shariākāndi and Dhunot, which have not only the advantage of a free subsoil drainage, but are also regularly cleaned out every year by the overflow of flood water from those rivers. Police stations Pānchbībī, Sibganj, Bogrā and Sherpur are the most unhealthy; while the civil station of Bogrā occupies a mean position.

Vital statistics.

"A comparison of the vital statistics for any lengthy periods," to quote the words of Mr. O'Malley, "is rendered impossible by the changes in the system of registering births and deaths which have taken place from time to time. In 1869, the duty of reporting deaths was imposed on the village *chaukidārs*, and in 1876 the system was extended to births; but the returns received were so incomplete that they were soon discontinued, and, except in towns, deaths alone were registered until 1892, when the collection of statistics of births as well as of deaths was ordered, and the system now in vogue was introduced."*

* Gazetteer of Cuttack, page 59.

According to the present system, births and deaths in the municipal towns are registered by the town *chaukidārs* and also by the guardians of the children. The reports are compiled in the *thānās* and sent to the Civil Surgeon.

In rural areas, the births and deaths are registered by the village *chaukidārs*, who report them to the *thānā* officers, who note them in the registers kept for the purpose, and then submit monthly returns to the Civil Surgeon. It is hardly necessary to add that the present system leaves much room for improvement.

Taking the figures for the ten years from 1893—1902 (annexed in the B. volume), we find that for the whole district the average number of births reported in a year was 29,168 or 34·13 per thousand of the population as it stood in 1901, and of deaths 23,474 or 27·46 per thousand. Of deaths, the largest number appears to have been caused by fever, which accounted for 21·98 per cent. per thousand, cholera coming next with a percentage of 1·63 only.

The death-rate for the quinquennium ending in 1904-05, appears to have been 28·35 per mille against 28·44, the average for the previous ten years. The death-rate has therefore been practically stationary.

It is interesting to compare these figures with those of other districts in the Rājshāhi Division. During the quinquennium ending 1904-05, while the death rate per mille of Bogrā was 28·35 that of Rājshāhi was 37·11, of Dinājpur 38·26, of Jalpāiguri 33·31, of Darjeeling 39·65, of Rangpur 32·92, and of Pābnā 33·47.

In 1905, the mortality reached the high figure of 37·85 per mille, owing chiefly to an outbreak of cholera in an epidemic form, which raised the death-rate from this cause to 9·35 per mille. It fell again to 26·74 per mille in 1906 and 26·85 in 1907.

Infirmities For every 100,000 of population there were 77 males and 64 females insane in 1881, 99 males and 80 females in 1891, 54 males and 52 females in 1901. There has thus been a sensible decrease in the number of insane persons in the district during the last decade. The figures for blind persons were 80 for males and 78 for females in 1881, 89 males and 100 females in 1891, 76 males and 52 females in 1901. The number of blind persons thus also shows a decrease. For lepers the figures are still more encouraging, for, whereas in 1881 there were 105 male and 29 female lepers, and in 1891 there were 81 male and 25 female lepers, in 1901 there were only 38 male and 11 female lepers. This marked and progressive decline in the number of the affected, especially between 1881 and 1891, has been common not only to Bengal but to the rest of India. It was attributed by general consent to a more accurate enumeration, *i.e.*, to the exclusion from the return of persons whose infirmities, whatever they might be, did not fall within the scope of the definition laid down in the instruction to the enumerators. But in the case of leprosy at least there is also a fairly widespread opinion that the disease is

really becoming less common. "The decline of leprosy in Europe," says Mr. Gait in his Census Report, "is attributed mainly to improved hygienic habits and surroundings and to increased material prosperity, and it may be hoped that the same causes will gradually bring about its disappearance from India."

Prevailing diseases. The proportion of deaths from different diseases for the ten years ending in 1902 has been given in the B volume. The following table gives the number of deaths from different diseases for each month of the year 1907:—

Months.	Cholera.	Small-pox.	Plague.	Fevers.	Dysentery and Diarrhoea.	Respiratory diseases.	Injuries.	Measles and Chicken pox.	Other diseases.	Total.
January ...	21	6	...	1,720	3	1	13	...	241	2,005
February ...	79	12	...	1,356	10	1	9	...	207	1,674
March ...	73	12	...	1,325	9	...	14	...	213	1,646
April ...	414	30	...	1,592	18	1	19	...	238	2,312
May ...	127	20	...	1,354	10	5	26	4	150	1,696
June ...	19	16	...	1,151	9	...	51	1	118	1,365
July ...	11	29	...	1,466	7	...	82	...	142	1,737
August ...	9	10	...	1,448	8	1	81	...	139	1,696
September ...	17	18	...	1,535	9	1	52	...	139	1,771
October ...	44	8	...	1,517	6	2	50	...	182	1,809
November ...	135	5	...	1,810	6	...	18	...	246	2,220
December ...	171	17	...	2,527	1	...	21	1	277	3,015
Grand Total ...	1,120	133	...	18,801	96	12	436	6	2,292	22,946

The prevailing diseases are fever, intermittent, remittent, continued, and their *sequelae*; various forms of bowel complaints, hepatitis, spleen disease, scrofula, scurvy, rheumatism, and in the cold months, bronchitis. It will be seen from the above figures that fever prevails almost throughout the year, and is responsible for by far the largest number of deaths in the district. It is least in June and causes greatest mortality during autumn and cold weather months. But as was remarked in the last *Gazetteer* "it is generally those who have suffered from repeated attacks of fever during the rains, and whose liver and spleen have

been affected, that sink during the cold season, when the range of the thermometer is extreme; and that fresh attacks during this season of the year are rather the exception than the rule."

In 1906, fever caused 18,448 deaths or 21·58 per mille of the population (out of 26·79 deaths per mille from all causes) against 20,826 deaths or 24·37 per mille in 1905. In 1907, it caused 18,801 deaths or 22·00 per mille, out of 26·85 from all causes. The mortality was heaviest in Sherpur *thānā*, where it caused 29·50 deaths per mille in 1906, and 30·40 deaths in 1907. Pānchbībī showed the next largest number of deaths from this source with a mortality of 27·46 per mille in 1906, and 30·75 in 1907.

Cholera and small-pox, more often in sporadic form, also appear from time to time. Goitre prevails especially in the police divisions of Shariākāndi and Dhunot, and principally in those parts in which jute is grown and steeped. It is said to attack women rather than men and rarely to appear before the person has attained the age of 15. In 1906, no less than 437 persons in Shariākāndi and 199 in Dhunot were found to have goitre.

Epidemics.

But cholera, small-pox, fever, diarrhoea and dysentery often take an epidemic form and carry off a large number of people. Cholera is common in *thānās* Dhunot and Shariākāndi, chiefly in the rainy season, when the foul water speedily spreads the epidemic among the villages. An epidemic of cholera visited the district in 1905, and carried off 7,990 persons; while in the winter of 1907 and the spring of 1908, 247 people fell victims to small-pox, mostly in Bogrā town. In both cases the infection was imported from outside the district.

General causes of disease.

"The causes of most of the diseases are to be found," it was said in the last *Gazetteer*, "rather in the nature of the ordinary occupations of the people, than in any special insalubrity of the district. Three-fourths of the people are growers of rice, the cultivation of which exposes them constantly to every inclemency of the weather. In the sowing season the peasant has to stand all day up to his knees in the flooded fields, whilst planting out the seedlings. In the cold weather, he has not sufficient clothing to keep him warm. His food is, for a large part of the year, and specially during the unhealthy autumn months, new rice of a coarse description, which is always found to be a cause of sickness." But it may be observed that the habits of the agriculturists of Bogra are not very different to those of the inhabitants of other parts of India, and a hardy outdoor life is considered by many to insure health rather than invite disease. In the Sanitary Report for 1908, the Civil Surgeon of Bogrā makes the following observations on this point:—"All the fever cases in this district were mainly malarial in their nature. Marshy low lands, bamboo bushes and thickly planted trees around the residential huts abound in the district. These causes prevent sunlight from penetrating into the huts and consequently they and their surroundings remain damp, and form favourable

breeding nests for mosquitoes. These mosquitoes inoculate the people, who generally sleep without much covering and without mosquito curtains. It is thus that malarial poison is spread amongst the people."

Insanitary condition of rural areas. Be that as it may, it cannot be denied that the general insanitary habits of living of the people of the rural areas, and the entire lack of any organisation for the improvement of the sanitary condition of the villages, are to a great extent responsible for the unsatisfactory health of this as of many other districts of Bengal.

The water-supply of villages is liable to many sources of contamination, and the villagers do not appear to exercise any discrimination in selecting their drinking water. People living away from the river banks generally use water from wells, which in most cases are not properly looked after. It is not unusual to find wells situated close to where people defecate, or deposit refuse from their kitchen and cow-sheds. The village sites are also often very foul, specially in the rainy season, when the villagers seldom go far from their homes to attend calls of nature.

Municipal towns. The sanitary arrangements of the town of Bogrā are far better now than was the case 20 years ago. The privy system has been introduced and night-soil is removed twice daily. The conservancy arrangements are also satisfactory, the streets are daily swept and kept clean; drains, though not made of masonry, have been laid down with due regard to their levels, and are kept clean. The town is now almost clear of those dense bamboo clumps which once overshadowed it, and prevented a free entrance of light and air into most of the dwelling houses. The river Karatoyā which flows by the municipality, is, however, in a most insanitary condition. It is a narrow stream and steadily silting up, and, like all streams in this country, is polluted with every conceivable kind of filth, at innumerable points throughout its length.

Some improvements are noticeable in the town of Sherpur. But there is still a great deal of jungle in the town, and the streets and lanes are very narrow and dirty, and the side drains are not well-levelled. The privy system has, however, been introduced and night-soil is removed with fair regularity. The municipality has sunk some masonry wells for drinking purposes, and some private houses have also got such wells in their compounds. On the whole the municipality may be said to have made a fair start, and if in future more attention continues to be paid to sanitary matters the health of the town is sure to improve.

It is regrettable, however, that the municipal town of Sherpur, like the rest of the *thānā*, still continues to be one of the unhealthiest spots in the district. Its mortality in 1906 was 28·02 per mille and in 1907 it rose to 43·85, when the death-rate for the district was only 26·85. This increase was due, it is said, to the prevalence of cholera and malaria in the town.

Medical institutions.

The following figures for the quinquennium ending 1904-05 are interesting.

District.	Number of dispensaries at the close of the present quinquennium.	Average annual grant from						Average annual expenditure.	Average annual total number treated.			Daily average number of in-patients.	Daily average number of out-patients.	Cost of diet per in-patient.	Ratio per cent. of the number of out-door patients to population.
		Municipal grant.	District Board grant.	Government grant.	Private subscriptions, endowments, etc.	Other sources.	Total.		In-patients.	Out-patients.	Total.				
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.						Rs. a. p.	
Bogra	9	1,989	4,185	880	3,381	27	10,462	10,462	273	50,451	50,724	10·29	364·93	0 1 8	6·03

In 1907, however, the number of dispensaries had increased to 11, and there were the following medical institutions in the district:—(1) Bogrā Municipal Charitable Dispensary, (2) Bogrā Zanānā Hospital, (3) Sherpur Municipal Charitable Dispensary, (4) Naokhilā Rāj Dispensary, (5) Khanjanpur Dispensary, (6) Jaipur Dispensary, (7) Khetlāl Dispensary, (8) Buriganj Dispensary, (9) Dhunot Dispensary, (10) Dhupchānchiā Dispensary, and (11) Kānchanpur Dispensary. The oldest dispensary in the district is naturally the one at head-quarters and was established in 1856; then followed the dispensary at Naokhilā, which was established in 1871 by Rājā Pramatha Nāth Rāi Bāhādur of Dighāpatiyā; and then in 1872, a dispensary at Sherpur, as a branch dispensary to the Bogrā Dispensary, was established. The other dispensaries are not very old, the Khanjanpur and Khetlāl dispensaries being of recent date, while the one at Kānchanpur was opened only in 1907.

The six latter dispensaries are maintained by the District Board with the aid of private subscriptions. In 1907, the total annual expenditure for the Jaipur Dispensary was Rs. 1,114 of which Rs. 312 came from private subscriptions. The total expenditure for Khetlāl was Rs. 735, of which Rs. 195 were found from private subscriptions; of Buriganj Rs. 1,269, of which Rs. 100 were realised from private subscriptions; of Dhunot Rs. 784, of which private subscriptions came to Rs. 126; Dhupchānchiā Rs. 1,261, of which Rs. 210 were subscribed. The dispensaries at Bogrā and Sherpur are jointly maintained by the municipalties concerned and the District Board. The annual expenditure of the Bogrā Dispensary in 1907 was Rs. 2,999 of which Rs. 320 were raised from private subscriptions; and of the Sherpur dispensary Rs. 1,028, of which Rs. 99 were from private

subscriptions. The Bogrā Zanānā Hospital is maintained entirely from the proceeds of the Taharunnessā Fund, and cost Rs. 900 in 1907. The Khanjanpur Dispensary is supported by Government and cost Rs. 1,417 in 1907, of which Rs. 60 were found by private subscription. The Naokhilā Rāj Dispensary is entirely maintained by the Rājā of Dighāpatiyā, who contributed Rs. 751 during that year. They are all doing very useful work and are much appreciated by the public.

The total number of patients treated in all these dispensaries rose from 60,869 in 1905 to 64,841 in 1906, and to 75,240 in 1907. The number of surgical operations performed in 1907 was 1,929 against 1,756 such operations in 1905.

The Bogrā Charitable Dispensary is under the immediate supervision of the Civil Surgeon of the district, with a medical subordinate of the Civil Hospital Assistant class. This is the most important medical institution in the district. It treats both in-door and out-door patients. In 1907, 10,135 patients were treated, of whom 262 received in-door treatment and 9,872 were out-door patients; the daily average of in-door patients was 9·21, and that of out-door patients 61·03. Seventy-one per cent. of the patients treated were Musalmāns, and 29 per cent. were Hindus. This is a great contrast to the state of things in 1872, when it appears that out of the out-door patients only 5·55 per cent. were Musalmāns, and as much as 90·1 per cent. were Hindus.

Malarial fevers, diseases of the digestive system, rheumatic affections, diseases of the eye and ear were the most prevalent diseases, which were treated both in the Bogrā and in the other dispensaries.

The Sherpur Dispensary treats very few in-door patients, the total amounting in 1907 to 62 only, against 9,092 out-door patients.

The other dispensaries, except the Zanānā Hospital at Bogrā, are in charge of Civil Hospital Assistants. They are all out-door dispensaries. The Zanānā Hospital is in charge of a lady doctor who holds a certificate from the Calcutta Campbell Medical School. It is a fairly popular institution, where 4,485 female patients were treated in 1907.

All the dispensaries possess necessary surgical and antiseptic instruments, and a stock of necessary medicines is always kept.

Sale of quinine in rural areas and other anti-malarial measures.

During 1906 fresh steps were taken to facilitate the sale of quinine in rural areas. The village postmasters and village schoolmasters were encouraged to sell quinine. Two packets of quinine were advanced to all postmasters, who applied for it. Seven packages were thus advanced and ten packages sold to postmasters at Re. 1-3-0 per package. Altogether 7,324 packets were sold against 7,224 in 1905. No sales were effected through the agency of schoolmasters. During 1907, 210 packages were sold and 131 packages advanced to the postmasters and village school pandits of the district.

No special anti-malarial measures in the way of mosquito destruction, etc., have ever been undertaken in the district.

Vaccination.

The prevalence of small-pox in the district has been noticed above. The mass of the people readily submit themselves and their children to vaccination, which has proved effective in checking epidemics.

Vaccinators are now appointed from among those, who are trained in the European method of vaccination. Vaccination direct from the calf, and arm to arm vaccination, are no longer practised, the operation being now done with glycerinated vaccine supplied from the central depôt at Shillong.

The Civil Surgeon is in charge of vaccination, and in 1907-08 his establishment for this work consisted of one Inspector, one Sub-Inspector, 17 licensed vaccinators, 11 apprentices, and 5 municipal vaccinators. The municipal vaccinators of Bogrā and Sherpur recieved pay at the rate of Rs. 10 and Rs. 12 per month, respectively. The municipal vaccinators treat people free of cost at the depôts, but charge annas 4 for each successful vaccination, from the people, if they have to go to their houses. The licensed vaccinators, who work in the rural areas realise annas 2 for each successful case of vaccination.

In 1874, there were 18,477 vaccination operations and each vaccinator operated on 3,079 persons. In 1883-84 the records show that 18,699 persons were vaccinated, and that each vaccinator operated on 849 persons. In 1893-94, 18,859 persons were vaccinated and each vaccinator operated on 554 persons. In 1903-04, 26,837 persons were vaccinated and each vaccinator operated on 822 persons. This shows that progress in vaccination has been steadily maintained in Bogrā since the year 1874.

The largest number of re-vaccinations was 1,563 in 1900-01, 1,766 in 1901-02 and again 1,849 in 1905-06. The reason for so many persons being re-vaccinated was that small-pox broke out in epidemic form during these years.

In 1907-08, 30,980 persons were vaccinated and the number of operations performed by each vaccinator was 1,475. The ratio of protected population in 1907-08 was 36·26 against 29·54 in 1906-07. The ratio of deaths from small-pox in 1907-08 was ·28 and the number of successful vaccinations during the same year was 25,929.

The compulsory Vaccination Act is in force in the two municipalities of the district, and as a result out of 213 available children 146 were vaccinated.

The total expenditure on vaccination during 1907-08 came to Rs. 1,494 and the average cost of each successful case was 11 pies only.

Fairs as causes of disease.

Altogether 33 fairs are held, of which three last only for a day or two. They take place during the most healthy season of the year and are not generally productive of disease. Under district

orders no fair can be opened, unless and until proper sanitary and medical arrangements are made for it.

Recent records show few epidemics of cattle disease, though sporadic cases of malignant sore throat, rinderpest, foot-and-mouth disease, and anthrax, appear to be common among the cattle in this district. In 1901 a veterinary dispensary was opened, and the Veterinary Assistant, who is paid partly by Government and partly by the District Board, has treated sporadic cases with success, and it appears that the people appreciate his services. Cattle disease.

CHAPTER V.

AGRICULTURE.

General conditions and soils.

It has already been noticed that the tract to the east of the Karatoyā is a part of the valley of the Brahmaputra, and is generally low-lying and intersected by numerous *khāls* and shallow swamps and marshes. It is subject to yearly inundation from the overflow of the Bramhaputra and the Bāngāli, and therefore gets a rich deposit of silt every year. There is very little jungle and almost the entire area is under cultivation. The soil is of whitish colour and known locally as *pali* (silt-covered). It is friable and extremely fertile and most of the fields bear two crops and some even three. Jute and paddy grow luxuriantly, but the soil seems to be specially adapted for jute, and the largest acreage under jute is to be found in *thānās* Dhunot and Shariākāndi. Paddy is very often sown after jute, and where this is not done *rabi* crops, such as *kāhan*, mustard, etc., are almost invariably grown. These latter crops are also sown in fields, which have yielded a crop of paddy before, and there are fields that produce jute, paddy, and *kāhan* or *karānchi* in the same agricultural year.

The western portion of the district presents a marked contrast to the eastern. It is in most parts well-wooded, and dense scrub jungle is to be found in *thānās* Sherpur and Pānchbībī and in parts of Sibganj, which contain a comparatively large proportion of cultivable waste land. This part of the district is slightly higher than the eastern parts, and is generally above flood level, though in exceptional years, like 1906, more than half of it remains under water for many days at a stretch. Its soil, locally known as *khiār*, is a hard compact clay of reddish colour, apparently of a *quasi*-laterite formation. Along its western boundary however, where it is watered by the Jamunā, it is overlaid by a recent alluvial deposit of *pali*, due no doubt to the overflow of the Atrāi. The *khiār* soil is generally suited to the growth of paddy and Adamdīghī and Pānchbībī are well known for the finer qualities of rice, which they produce. Jute, however, is also grown to some extent in the Sibganj *thānā* and the *pali* tract in Pānchbībī and Adamdīghī. The soil is perhaps not so fertile as to the east of the Karatoyā and requires manuring on a much more liberal scale, and fields yielding more than one crop are more the exception than the rule.

The two main divisions of the soil, *pali* and *khiār*, are subdivided according to the fertility of the soil and its level. Most of the high lands are *bāstu* or *khod* lands, on which the homesteads

are situated, surrounded by a patch of home garden, growing chillies, onions, brinjals, tobacco, and such miscellaneous crops. Lands lower than the *bāstu* grow paddy, chiefly *āus*; and in *thānās* Sibganj and Pānchbībī, sugar. Still lower lands, which are not above flood level in ordinary years, chiefly grow *āman* paddy and jute, whereas in *bil* lands *baran* paddy is largely grown. Lastly in *char* lands *karānchi* or *kāhan*, pulses, mustard, and water-melons are the principal crops.

Agricultural seasons and rainfall.

The agricultural year may be divided into four seasons, *viz.*, spring (March to May), the rains (May to September), autumn (October to November) and winter (December to February). At the registering station at Bogrā, the average rainfall for the last 32 years was 72·77 inches. The normal rainfall in spring was 12 inches, in the rains 53 inches, in autumn 5 inches, in winter 2 inches. It will thus be seen that the fall of rain in Bogrā, as in most other districts in Eastern Bengal, is in ordinary years more than sufficient for all agricultural purposes. The most important months from this point of view are May, September and October. If the May showers, which are the precursors of the monsoon rains do not fall, sowing of paddy is prejudicially delayed, and the young jute plants begin to wither up. But deficiency of rainfall in September and October is still more dangerous as it affects the maturing of the staple rice crop. The scarcity of 1866, contemporary with the Orissa famine, was entirely due to the cessation of the rains by the 15th September, and the severer distress in 1874 was also due to a similar premature stoppage of rain. In the latter year only 37 inches of rain fell during the twelve months.

Irrigation.

There is no general system of irrigation in the district, and in the eastern parts it is very seldom needed. But river and tank water are both largely taken advantage of in many parts of the west of the district for the purposes of irrigation, and in seasons of drought are of the greatest value. In the east of the district, the annual floods of the Brahmaputra irrigate the fields, even when the rainfall is scanty. The contrivance ordinarily used for raising water is that called the *dongā*, a trough dug out from the trunk of a tree, one of the ends of which is closed. This end is pressed into the river or tank by a man standing on it. When filled, he removes his weight and the trough is raised by a kind of lever formed by a loaded bamboo. The lift of a single *dongā* is between two and four feet, according to its length. When water has to be raised to a greater height, a series of troughs is used, working one above the other. Another contrivance for short lifts is the *siuni*. It is made of a closely-woven mat from eighteen inches to two feet square, one side of which is doubled up and strongly sewn together. The scoop thus formed has two ropes attached to the point of the wedge-shaped end, and one to each of the front corners. It is worked by two men, each holding two ropes, who plunge it into

the water, and draw it out full with a long swinging motion. The water is discharged by a quick raising of the back of the instrument at the end of the swing just over a channel leading into the field to be irrigated. Water is sometimes diffused by constructing *bunds* or bars across smaller rivers and water-courses. During the drought of last year, when very little rain fell after the middle of July, the more industrious of the *rāiyats* saved large areas of paddy land by irrigating their fields from the nearest tanks and water channels. In some cases water was brought by means of artificial channels, even from a distance of one or two miles from the fields watered. It will be a great boon to the agricultural community and a security against a total failure of crops, if all the old tanks and *dighis*, of which a considerable number exists in the district, but mostly in a moribund condition, are cleaned up and re-excavated.

Area under cultivation. During the year 1906-07, out of the total area of the district (869,760 acres) 12,000 acres were shown in the Season and Crops Report of the Agricultural Department, as not available for cultivation; 97,912 acres as cultivable waste other than fallow; 193,748 acres as current fallow; and the remaining, 458,100 acres as the net cropped area. But of the cropped area, 273,000 acres were cropped more than once in the same year. The total area brought under cultivation for different crops during the year was therefore 731,000 acres as per details given below:—

	Acres.
Aus or autumn rice	155,000
Aman or winter rice	290,000
Gram	4,000
Other food grains	36,000
(Rabi cereals and pulses) Linseed ...	11,500
Til or Gingelly	12,500
Rape and mustard	61,000
Condiments and spices	1,000
Sugar-cane	20,000
Jute	118,000
Mulberry	130
Tobacco	1,000
Orchard and garden produce ...	5,000
Miscellaneous crops (food) ...	12,000
Miscellaneous (non-food)	3,970
Total cropped area ...	731,000

No perfectly accurate information is available as to the actual area under cultivation, as there has been no cadastral survey of the district. The figures given are mere estimates, and are based chiefly on information supplied by the *thānā* police It is very probable that the areas, shown under the heads current fallow and cultivable waste, have been over-estimated. In a normal year, and the year 1906-07 was if anything favourable to

agriculture, the current fallow, representing that portion of the cultivable area which is left uncultivated, either for want of resources, or on account of the death of the owner, or through unseasonable weather, for no land is known to be left intentionally fallow, cannot be very much in excess of 5 to 8 per cent. of the total cultivated area of the district. About 20 per cent. would represent a bad year, and it is only a succession of bad years and unseasonable rainfall that could possibly account for such a depression of the agricultural industry, as is represented by the figures given, which come to 45 per cent. of the total cultivated area. For a normal year current fallows might be put down at something like 30,000 acres. It is also doubtful whether 50,000 acres will not correctly represent the total cultivable waste that now exists in the district. As there are no hills and forests in the district, nearly one-seventh of the total area seems also an over-estimate for the area not available for cultivation. On the other hand, *āman* or winter rice could safely be raised to 350,000 acres; rape and mustard to 80,000; jute to 250,000; and sugar-cane to 25,000. Pulses, which include *masūr*, *khesāri*, *mūng*, *kalāi*, *arhar*, etc., may also be safely raised to 60,000 acres; orchard and garden to 15,000. Other crops, some of which are by no means unimportant, have also been entirely left out in the list. These are—

	Acres.
Summer or *Boro* rice (roughly)	5,000
Baran or *bil* rice	15,000
Maize (chiefly in Pānchbībī)	1,000
Millets which include *chenā* and *kāhan* or *karānchi* (largely grown in Shariākāndi and Dhunot)	20,000
San Hemp (other fibres)	10,000

Chillies, onions, potatoes are probably included in condiments and miscellaneous crops, but should be separately shown. No less than 20,000 acres are now cropped with potato.

Increase of jute cultivation. There has been a marked extension of jute cultivation in the district within the last ten years, due no doubt to the profitable character of the produce. In 1903-04, only 72,000 acres were shown as under jute. In 1904-05, the area was reported to be 132,300. The exceptionally high prices in 1906-07 brought about another marked extension, and during the present year, 1907-08, the area cropped with jute has been reported to be 200,000 acres. It is not improbable that some of the extended area might have been previously cropped with paddy, and that some rice fields have been given up for jute; but it should be remembered that nearly half of the jute land bears a second crop of rice, and therefore the contraction in the produce of rice has been much less than would appear to be the case at first sight.

Extension of cultivation.

There has been a good deal of clearing of jungle in the Pānchbībī and the Sherpur *thānās* in recent years, and there has been thus a marked increase in the expansion of cultivation. In the Jaipur *khāsmahāl* within the last five years, 400 acres of jungle land have been brought under cultivation. The progress in the other parts of the same *thānā* (Pānchbībī) has been equally rapid. The rental of all the *zamindārs* shows an increase from the settlement of waste and *patit* lands.

Pressure of population on agriculture.

The last census disclosed a population of 854,533 souls, of whom 748,000 depend on agriculture. The entire cropped area including the area under double crops according to the accepted figures came to nearly 731,000 acres, of which nearly 450,000 acres were under paddy. It also appears that it is possible to extend cultivation over nearly three thousand acres of culturable land, which is now lying uncultivated. It is therefore clear that even if we take half a seer per day, or 4½ maunds annually, to be the average consumption of rice per head of population, and the yield of paddy per acre to be 10 maunds, there is still room for a further growth of the population.

Principal Crops.

The principal crops grown in the district are—

(1) paddy, (2) jute, (3) sugar-cane, (4) mustard and other oilseeds, and (5) potatoes.

Besides these almost all other crops suitable to the soil of Bengal are also grown here to a small extent.

Paddy.

There are altogether four kinds of paddy grown in the district.—(1) the *āus*, (2) the *āman*, (3) the *boro* or spring paddy, and (4) the *baran āman* or *bīl* paddy ; of these (1) and (2) are by far the more important kinds.

Aus or *Bhādoi*.

As has been noticed above, 164,200 acres have been shown to be the normal area under this crop. Most of the *āus* is grown in the *pali* tract, the *khiār* tract being specially suited for *āman* paddy. *Aus* like *āman* in the district is both transplanted and broadcast, but most of it is sown broadcast.

In the *pali* tracts *āus* is sown in March and April, but in the *khiār* tracts, sometimes as late as May. It is harvested in June, July and August. About 25 to 30 seers of seed are required for an acre, and the yield has been variously estimated. The lowest estimate is 5¼ cwt., based on a few crop cutting experiments. But the yield is generally much greater, and at the lowest 7 cwt. may be taken to be the normal. *Aus* rice is coarser than *āman*, and is considered to be more difficult to digest. It is generally consumed by the lower classes. The opinion has also been expressed that it is a more uncertain crop than *āman*, but this does not seem to be the case, as the rainfall in the later months of the monsoon is generally more uncertain than the fall in

May and June. There is therefore room for a good deal of extension of the cultivation of this crop, especially as it is in most cases possible to reap a second crop of *āman* from the same field, or to grow *rabi* crops on it. It is said that in such cases the yield of *āman* is much poorer, but even if this were so, the cultivator cannot fail to be the gainer by getting two crops of paddy from the same field. *Aus* or autumn rice is represented in Bogrā by 18 chief varieties, of which (1) *Kānchāmani*, (2) *Garhiyā*, (3) *Kalsirha Garhiyā*, (4) *Dhāl Garhiyā*, (5) *Balun*, (6) *Bhādoi*, (7) *Ranjanā*, (8) *Samudrā Phenā*, (9) *Sarshābuti*, are best known. The majority of these species are hardy, and can endure considerable drought, though some, such as the various species of *garhiyā*, prefer a damp, though not absolutely marshy soil.

***Aman* or *Haimanti* (winter rice).**

Aman or *haimantī* (winter) rice is the principal food crop of the district. The normal area under it has been shown to be 303,000 acres in the returns of the Agricultural Department. It is grown both in the *khiār* and the *pali* tracts, but chiefly in the *khiār*. It is mostly transplanted but in rare cases in the *pali* tracts, it is also sown broadcast. In *pali* soil, seeds for transplanted *āman* are sown in seed-beds, once in April or May, and for the second time in July. The first seedlings are transplanted in June and July, and the second lot in September. The harvesting of both is done in December. It is said that in the *pali* tracts, 12 seers of seed are required for an acre of land, to be sown with transplanted paddy and the yield is about 9 cwt. The net earning of the cultivator per acre has been calculated to be Rs 29. In *khiār* tracts, the seed is sown in seed-beds in June and July, and transplanted in July and August, and sometimes as late as September; the time of transplantation after the seedlings are ready, depending entirely on the rainfall. A slightly larger quantity of seed amounting to 18 seers is required for an acre in the *khiār* tract, and the average yield is also greater, amounting to 10 cwt. in a good year. The fields are carefully prepared for *āman*. The first ploughing and cross-ploughing are sometimes, though very rarely, done in winter. It is then frequently manured with from 15 to 18 cwt. per acre of cow-dung or decaying vegetable matter taken usually from the deep parts of a marsh. The field is again ploughed two or three times in April and May, and then when there is sufficient rain water in the fields, it is harrowed with the *mai*, made heavy by one or two men standing on it. The whole field is thus reduced to a pulp, and the seedlings are planted in the soft mud about half a cubit apart, three or four seedlings being stuck at each point. After this the cultivators have little else to do, but weed out grass and other weeds that might shoot up, and when the fields get dry to occasionlly stir up the earth with a sharp iron instrument called the *nirni*. In broadcast fields of *āus*, chiefly, after the plants have come up to a height of about 8 to 10 inches, an implement called *Nāngliā*, formed of a

thick bamboo set with teeth of wood, is drawn over the land by bullocks. This clears the land of weeds, and by stirring up the earth at the roots of the seedlings, helps a vigorous growth.

The most favourable climatic conditions for the rice crop are—

(1) Premonitory showers in May facilitating preparation of land and sowing in seed-beds; (2) heavy showers at the end of June and July, facilitating transplantation; (3) fair weather for a fortnight in August facilitating weeding operations; (4) heavy rains in September when the *āman* is coming into ear; (5) casual but heavy showers in October about once a week specially during the first fortnight; and (6) one or two good showers at the end of January facilitating the ploughing up of rice land in cold weather. It need hardly be pointed out, however, that the most critical period comes in the month of October, when the fate of the crop depends entirely on there being enough water to mature it and fill out the ears. The *āus* crop does not need such a heavy or late rainfall, as the *āman* does.

The following account of the varieties of winter rice is taken from the Statistical Account of Bogrā:—

"*Aman* or winter rice is represented by sixty-three different varieties, specimens of each of which were sent in 1873 to both the London and Vienna Exhibitions:—(1) *Sukharāj sālnyā*, (2) *Chengā māguri*, (3) *Khuman*, (4) *Ukunmadhu sālnyā*, (5) *Dāl kachu*, (6) *Aswinā*, (7) *Janak rāi*, (8) *Biragānjiā*, (9) *Nāgdum*, (10) *Gajālgariā*, (11) *Samrās*, (12) *Kānsākālam*, (13) *Pankhirāj*, (14) *Kālāganchi*, (15) *Tilkāphul sālnyā*, (16) *Sankar mugi*, (17) *Kanakchur*, (18) *Māil sārā*, (19) *Saral bānsi*, (20) *Lohādāngā*, (21) *Jatā*, (22) *Punyāmāguri*, (23) *Sulpāin*, (24) *Mugi*, (25) *Singradal kachu*, (26) *Bānsi*, (27) *Banyā mugi*, (28) *Kālā sālnyā*, (29) *Sabaskhān*, (30) *Hānskol*, (31) *Arāil*, (32) *Kāti sāil*, (33) *Ban sāon*, (34) *Khirsābād sālnyā*, (35) *Kānkuyā*, (36) *Kesar kuli*, (37) *Bānsphul sālnyā*, (38) *Madar jatādhāri*, (39) *Apchhiyā*, (40) *Magi*, (41) *Kāyar bhog*, (42) *Suli*, (43) *Sāiljatā*, (44) *Phulgānjiyā*, (45) *Hāruyā māguri*, (46) *Beta*, (47) *Surjyamani*, (48) *Pākhrā*, (49) *Dānkamāri*, (50) *Maheshbathān sālnyā*, (51) *Pānthi*, (52) *Khalsi*, (53) *Halidājāun*, (54) *Bilāt kalam*, (55) *Rāi mugi*, (56) *Galādariyā*, (57) *Mehi sālnyā*, (58) *Kesarganchi*, (59) *Demphā*, (60) *Sāil, khāguri*, (61) *Pani sāil*, (62) *Padmanāl*, (63) *Satiyā*. The greater number of *āman* rices prefer a very moist or swampy soil. This is not, however, always the case, for *biragānjiā*, *sankar mugi*, *kanakchur* and *mugi* are always sown on dry and high lands. The best and finest *āmans* produced in the district of Bogrā are all the *sālnyās*, *bīragānjiā*, and *saralbānsi*. These and *madar jatādhāri* are amongst the most productive. *Nāgdum* is the coarsest, and *punyā māguri*, *banyā mugi*, and *sabaskhān* give the smallest yield. *Aswinā* is the earliest to ripen, being cut in September

(Aswin). *Chengā māguri, gajāl gariyā* and *kanakchur* are the best suited for *khai*, a preparation of rice much in use."

Besides the above, some seeds of fine varieties of paddy, *viz.*, the Central Province *āus* and *Samudra Bali āman*, were obtained from the Agricultural Department, Bengal, during the Bogrā Exhibition of April 1905, and were distributed among several *rāiyats.* The *bālām* of Backergunge, *boka* of Assam and table-rice of Dinājpur were also experimented on with success. All these new varieties have since been adopted for cultivation by the *rāiyats.*

Cultivation of *āus* and *āman* together. In low lands 30 seers of *āus* and 7 or 8 seers of *āman* are sometimes sown together per acre in April and May. When the *āus* ripens in July, the ears are cut and about 15 maunds of *āus* are obtained. The *āman* plants are left to grow up as the flood rises, and when the flood subsides, these plants fall to the ground and new shoots come up from the root, as well as from any other nodes which touch the ground. If the plants are not completely submerged and destroyed by the flood, almost a full crop of *āman* is obtained in December or January. The system, it is said, effects a considerable saving in seed.

***Boro* or spring paddy.** There are two varieties of this paddy. The early variety is sown in June and harvested in September. This is the commonest variety and is almost wholly transplanted. It is sown by the side of *bils*, in the beds of silted up rivers, and marshes. Its yield is almost the same as that of *āus* paddy. A later variety is sown in seed-beds in October or November, transplanted in December, and harvested in May.

***Baran āman* or marsh paddy.** It is a long-stemmed and rapidly growing, though coarse, variety of *āman*. The crop is grown to a fairly large extent in the *bīls* and low-lying lands of *thānās* Dhunot, Shariākāndi and the eastern portion of Bogrā. The land has to be carefully prepared and the seed is mostly sown broadcast. The two species of this kind of rice which are most successful are known as the *demphā* and *hānskol.* As the water rises, the plant grows; a growth of as much as 9" to 12" in 24 hours in the beginning of the rainy season having sometimes been observed. And as the plants grow as high as 23 feet, it is almost impossible for them to get submerged.

Jute. After rice, jute is the most important produce. The rapid growth of jute trade in recent years has done much to enrich the inhabitants of the Dhunot, Shariākāndi, Sibganj and Pānchbībī *thānās.*

Area. In 1908, jute was grown on some 200,000 acres. Of this area, 45 per cent or 65,400 acres bear a second crop of winter rice, 22 per cent. or 32,700 acres produce other food crops, and 30 per cent. do not yield a second crop. The last are chiefly lands from which the flood water does not recede in September and October.

Method of cultivation. The principal varieties of jute grown in the district are placed in two main classes according to the season when they are

cultivated. These are :—(1) the *jāli* or *āus*, and (2) the *numliā* or *āman*. *Jāli* jute is sown in low lands in the months of February and March, and is cut in July and August. *Numliā* jute is sown on high lands in April and May, and is cut in August, September, and October. For the cultivation of both varieties the land is first ploughed four or five times ; the larger clods are then broken, if necessary, by means of a bamboo mallet. It is then manured either with cow-dung or marsh-weeds and the seed is sown. It is necessary, according to Mr. Finlow, to sow the jute so long before the monsoon as to give the plants time to reach a height of 3—4 feet, after which heavy rain does no damage. The seed is sown broadcast at the rate of 9 lbs. per acre. The sowing is carried out crosswise, *i.e.*, first from north to south and then from east to west, thus ensuring a fairly even distribution of the seed. When the young plants have come up to a height of three to five inches the land is weeded and harrowed with an implement called *nāngliā*, which serves the purpose of a harrow and light roller combined. When sufficiently grown they are cut off at about two inches from the root. There is no fixed time for cutting ; some *rāiyats* begin to do so when the plants are about to blossom, while others wait much longer. The best time to cut, however, is when the seeds have just set ; for at this period a heavy yield of fibre of good quality is obtained.

Retting.

The plants are cut, with a crescent-shaped, toothed sickle, just above the ground, and the upper portions of the cut stems are first exposed to the sun for a day or two in order to allow the leaves to wither, the lower portion being kept as much as possible from drying in the meantime, by placing the stems on the ground in layers so that the top leafy portion of one layer covers the lower portion of another. The withered stems are then stripped of any small branches and tied loosely into bundles about 8 inches in diameter, after which they are placed upright in water 1—2 feet deep for about three days, in order to induce even retting, by allowing the process to commence first in the longer lower portion of the stems. Finally, the bundles are laid flat in water at least three feet deep, side by side, the tops of one bundle against the root end of the next, so as to form a regular platform. It is permissible, if the water is deep enough, to put a second layer of bundles over the first and at right angles to it. The whole is then immersed completely by weights of stone, logs of wood, earth, etc. The time required for the retting of jute varies with the temperature of the water and takes generally from about 10 to 30 days.

Stripping.

The stripper, standing in clear water about three feet deep, takes a small bundle of stems such as he can conveniently handle, and, after removing as much of the bark as possible by passing the stems through his hands, strikes the root ends of the stems with a short piece of bamboo about as thick as a man's wrist. He now breaks the stems at a point about one-third of their length

from the bottom, and, holding the bottoms, with both hands, jerks the broken stems backwards and forwards in the water, with the result that two-thirds of the woody portion separate completely from the fibre and float away. The portion of the fibre thus freed is then wrapped round the hand and a similar series of jerks liberate the remaining portions of the stem. It only remains now to wash the fibre thoroughly to get rid of adherent bits of stick or bark, and then to dry it, after which it is ready to be rolled into 'drums' for the market

Out-turn. One thousand three hundred and sixty-seven lbs. or nearly 18 maunds of dry fibre is the average outturn per acre. If the price is calculated at the low rate obtainable in 1907, *viz.*, Rs. 3-8-0 per maund, it brings Rs. 63. Taking the cost of cultivation to be Rs. 45, the cultivator makes a net profit of Rs. 18 per acre. But the prices ruling in 1907 were unusually low. Jute sold at Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 per maund in 1906, and consequently gave a profit of Rs. 99 to Rs. 135 per acre.

Local varieties. The following are, according to a report of Babu Annadānanda Sen, Deputy-Collector, the different varieties of jute grown in this district. They belong to the two species of corchorus, *viz.*, (1) *Corchorus Capsularis* with rounded capsules, and (2) *Corchorus Olitorius* with long cylindrical pods.

I.—*C. Capsularis.*—Under this species three varieties are found:—*Desi meghlāl*, *Tebra āmaniā*, *Tebra āusiā*.

The *Desi meghlāl* has red stems, round pods, and can grow both on high and low lands, and can stand attack of water. It is sown in Fālgoon or Chaitra and harvested in Asārh or Srāvan. The fibres are reddish, and the bark thick and heavy. It is retted in 15 days, and grows as high as 15 feet. The produce is 20 maunds per acre. *Tebra āmaniā* has either white or red stems and round pods. It can grow both on high and low lands and can stand water. It is sown in Baisākh, and harvested in Áswin. The fibre is white and bark thick and white. It rets in 15 days and grows about 9 feet high. The produce is 18 maunds per acre. *Tebra āusiā* has white plants and round pods. It grows well on low lands and is unsuited to high lands. The sowing commences early in Fālgoon, and it is harvested in Asārh and Srāvan. It can stand attack of water. It rets in 13 days and grows about 7 feet high. The produce is 15 maunds per acre.

II.—*C. Olitorius.*—Under this species two varieties exist, the *Lāl Kochan*, and *Dhalā Kochan*.

(1) *Lāl Kochan.*—The stems are red and the pods elongated. It grows on high land and cannot withstand immersion It germinates without the help of rain. It is sown in Baisākh, and harvested in Kārtik. The fibre is heavy and strong, and takes about seven weeks in retting. Difficult to free from bark. The fibres make excellent ropes. Grows about 12 feet high. The produce is 22 maunds per acre.

(2) *Dhalā Kochan* has light green stems and elongated pods. It is sown in Baisākh and harvested in Kārtik. It grows on high land and cannot withstand water. Rets in three weeks. The fibres are heavy, and difficult to disfibre. It germinates in three days without requiring rain, and grows about 12 feet high. The produce is 22 maunds per acre.

Other fibre plants.

Amongst these may be mentioned:—(1) The *Hibiscus cannabinus* or *meshtāpāt*, which grows best in clay soil mixed with sand. This crop, however, is not very popular with the *rāiyats*. (2) *Crotalaria Juncea* or *san*; its cultivation is increasing every year in Bogrā. It is the only leguminous fibre-producing plant in the district. It is chiefly used for purposes of manuring the fields. The plants are stripped of their leaves and flowers, and the top twigs are also chipped up and the mixture strewn on the fields; or the plants are burnt as they stand. The green mixture or the burnt plants are first hoed in with the soil, and then the plough is passed over the fields. This is done in December and January before the soil is prepared for the jute crop. Fishing nets are also prepared from the fibre, in which case they are hardened by being immersed in the boiling juice of the *gāb* or *Diospyrus embryopteris*. Fibres could also be extracted from the following plants and trees, which are to be found in varying quantities in the district:—(3) *Calotropis gigantea* or *ākhand*; (4) *Borassus flabelliformis* or *tāl* tree. (5) *Areca catechu* or betel-nut tree. (6) *Pandanus odoratissimus* or screw-pine; (7) *Bromelia ananas*, or the pine-apple; (8) *Linum usitatissimum* or flax.

Sugar-cane.

Sugar-cane cultivation is almost confined to the police divisions of Pānchbībī and Sibganj. There are four varieties of canes, *viz*:—(1) The *Belati*, (2) the *Vanda mukhi*, (3) the *Nari*, and (4) the *Astamukhi*. The former two according to the manager of the Jaipur Government Estates were imported into the district; the last two are indigenous. Another kind called the *Samsera* has been recently introduced into the Jaipur Government Estates and is now grown there to some extent.

It is his best land, which a cultivator generally uses for sugar-cane. The soil is first turned up in November. After using the plough twice or thrice, black mud from ditches is thrown on the land. The land is again ploughed and reploughed until the mud gets thoroughly mixed with the soil. Cow-dung and sometimes oil-cakes are then thrown on the land, which is again ploughed up. Furrows are made with the plough, 12 inches apart, and along these the sets are laid down, 4 or 5 inches from each other. The furrows are fairly straight and equidistant and about 6 inches deep. After planting the sets they are covered with soil taken from the side of furrows. The planting in the district is generally done in February and March. The upper part of the cane, that is to say, the "tops" are used for seed. Tops, which contain six or more joints, are cut up into sets, each containing two or three

internodes. The fields with canes have to be frequently weeded until the plants are about 5 or 6 feet high. When the canes have grown to a larger height, some 5 or 6 of them are tied together, in order to enable them to stand erect and to prevent jackals from eating them. The harvesting commences in February. The period which elapses between planting and reaping varies from 7 to 12 months. The same field cannot be used in two successive years for sugarcane.

The raw sugar or *gur* produced in Pānchbībī is excellent in quality. The process of manufacture has been described elsewhere.

The most serious pests and diseases of sugar-cane are the jackals, the red smut, the white-ant and the moth borer. No serious attempt is made by the cultivators to cope with any of the diseases, but the jackals are kept away by such devices, as wrapping the canes with leaves. The field is also carefully fenced round with woven bamboo or with thorny plants to prevent jackals from getting through.

Indigenous canes are said to be very seldom attacked by disease. Of the two imported species, the *Belati* and the *Vanda mukhi*, the former is more susceptible to disease.

The normal yield for this district has been estimated at 26 cwt. of *gur* per acre and the net earning of the *rāiyat* at Rs. 60 per acre.

Rape and other oil-seeds. Among the oilseed crops that are grown in the district rape (*Brassica campestris*) occupies the largest area (90,000 acres). It is grown wholly in the *pali* tract, being sown on land from which the water subsides in October, and is harvested in January and February. The average out-turn per acre is 4 cwt. The net earning of the cultivator after deducting the cost of cultivation (Rs. 22-8-0) comes to Rs. 17-8-0.

Two other oilseeds, *viz* :—Linseed (*Linum usitatissimum*) and *til* or gingelly (*Sesamum indicum*) are grown in the district on a small scale. Of the *til* there are two or three varieties, the best and most common kind being the *krishna* or black *til*, a crop that grows in the latter part of the rainy season, and matures in the beginning of the cold weather. Most of the oilseeds are sown as a second crop on fields from which paddy or jute have been harvested.

Potatoes. The potato is a newly-introduced crop in this district, but its cultivation is fast extending. There are two kinds of potatoes grown here, the *deshi* and the Patna species, white and red. Experimental cultivation of the Naini Tāl potato in the Jaipur Government Estates has shown that it does very well in the district; but the drawback is that its tubers cannot be preserved. Potatoes are planted in October and November, and dug up in January, February and March. The average out-turn per acre is about 50 maunds and brings Rs. 75 at Re. 1-8 per maund for the local variety. The net earning of the cultivator

after deducting the cost of cultivation comes to Rs. 30 per acre.

Other miscellaneous crops.

A few other crops, mostly leguminous or cruciferous plants, are grown here on a small scale mostly in the *pali* tract. They are sown as a second crop after *āman* or *āus* rice or jute has been harvested. The principal are—*matar* or peas (*Pisum sativum*), *masur* (*Cicer lens*), *arhar* (*Cytisus cajan*), *mās-kalāi* (*Phaseolus Roxburghii*), *mūng* (*Phaseolus mungo*), *khesāri* (*Lathyrus sativus*). Besides these chief varieties there are other green crops which are met with in this district:—*Kālā mūng* (*Phaseolus maximus*), *sonā mūng* (*Phaseolus aureus*), *mākhan sim* (*Dolichos gladiatus*), *kālā sim* (*Dolichos virosus*), *barbati* (*Dolichos catjang*), *būt* or *chholā* (*Cicer arietinum*). Most of these are sown between the 15th October and the end of November, on *aus* land, which has lain fallow from the previous August or September, but *chholā* is very often sown as late as the beginning of January, when the harvesting of the paddy has been delayed. It is believed that equal quantities of mustard and peas intermixed in one field produce a good crop of each. Linseed and *matar* are also said to grow well together and to give a larger produce than when sown separately. *Matar* seed is sometimes scattered amongst *bunā āman* rice when the latter is half grown at the end of October. This is done after the heavy rains and floods of the year are over and when the *āman* crop itself is likely to be a late one.

Yams.

Several kinds of yams are grown here in large quantities. The *sutni ālu* (*Dioscorea fasciculata*) is particularly prolific and cheap. Some of the other species grown are—*Dioscorea aluta*, *D. rubella*, *D. aculeata*, and *D. purpurea*. *Chīnā* (*Panicum miliaceum*) is also produced. The *bāigun* (*Solanum melongena*), the *kulibāigun* (*S. longum*), and the *rām-bāigun* (*S. hirsutum*) are cultivated. *Ulu* and *khari* grass (*Saccharum cylindricum* and *fuscum*) though not grown from seed, are fenced in and protected on land which produces them. The *shar* (*Saccharumsara*) is used for making ropes to fasten the thatch on houses, whilst *ulu*, *khari* and *bena* (*Andropogon muricatus*) are used for the thatch itself. *Juār* (*Andropogon sorghum*) is grown in Pānchbībī police division. The bamboo (*Bambusa arundinacea*) is found in every part of the district.

Tobacco.

Tobacco is grown on a very small area. The seed is sown in September and the seedlings transplanted in October. The leaves are gathered in the latter part of January and February. Cooch Behār tobacco has been newly introduced in the Jaipur Government Estates.

Mulberry.

Mulberry cultivation, which had almost entirely disappeared, has recently received some encouragement from the District Board, and strips of raised lands near Bogrā town have been planted with it. Its cultivation now extends over an area of 149 acres. A fairly large quantity of raised lands previously used for mulberry cultivation now still remains fallow, as it entails considerable

expenditure of labour and capital to level these raised lands and make them fit for the cultivation of paddy or jute.

Fruit trees.

The fruit trees indigenous to the Bogrā district, or raised from seed in it, are as follows :—The mango or *ām* (*Mangifera indica*), of which the well-known Malda species is found here; the guava or *peyārā* (*Psidium pyriferum*) ; the *jām* (*Eugenia jambolana*) ; the custard apple or *ātā* (*Anona squamosa*) ; the tamarind, *imli* or *tetul* (*Tamarindus indica*) ; the pumelo or *bātāvi nebu* (*Citrus decumana*); the lime or *nebu* (*Citrus limonum*), of which there are several varieties; the jack-fruit or *kāntāl* (*Artocarpus integrifolia*); the *pāpaya* (*Carica papaya*); the pine-apple or *ānāras* (*Bromelia ananas*) ; the *nonā* (*Anona reticulata*); the plantain or *kalā* (*Musa paradisiaca*); the cocoa-nut (*Cocos nucifera*) ; the *gāb* (*Diospyros embryopteris*) ; the Bengal quince or *bel-phal* (*Aegle marmelos*) ; the *lichi* (*Nephelium lichi*) ; the fig or *dumur* (*Ficus carica*) ; the date-tree or *khājur* (*Phœnix sylvestris*) ; the pomegranate or *dālim* (*Punica granatum*). The jack is the most plentiful fruit in Bogrā, nearly every fifth tree met with belonging to this species. The plantain and mango are also abundant; but the date and the cocoa-nut are both scarce.

Prices of Agricultural produce.

The following remarks which occur in the Provincial report for 1906-07 are also true of this district :—

"The prices of rice, the staple food of the people, attained heights far exceeding any previously attained in this part of India. The average wholesale price for the year at the representative marts selected for the statement was Rs. 4-15-0 per maund, as against Rs. 3-7-0 in the previous year, while in 1904-05 rice was selling at an average of Rs. 2-11-0 only, which may be regarded as approximately the normal price of present times. The causes of the extraordinary high prices which commencing with the cold weather of 1905-06 increased constantly in severity throughout 1906-07 are to be found : (1) in the loss of one-third of the winter rice crop of 1905-06, followed by poor harvests of summer and autumn rice in 1906, and another winter crop somewhat below the normal ; (2) in the high prices realised for jute and other produce ; (3) in August 1906, prices of rice ranged about Rs. 2-6-0 per maund above those of the corresponding date in 1905, the cause of this extra rise was the damage done by flood and difficulty experienced in delivering by rail and river the huge stocks imported from Burma, (4) in the last quarter of 1906-07 prices would have been low, but that the cultivators were very careful to keep all the rice they required for seed and for their own consumption ; consequently far less than the usual proportion of the crop came to market. But beyond all these causes there is another wider and deeper cause, which is raising the price of commodities all over India. Not only in this province and Bengal, but also in Bombay, the Central Provinces, and the United Provinces prices have increased rapidly during the last two years."

Agricultural implements.

The agricultural implements used in the district of Bogrā are as follows:—The *nāugal* or plough, drawn by two bullocks, and consisting of the *isā* or shaft, the *phāl* or share, the *khil* or pin, and the *guti* or binding rope, and the *joyāl* or yoke, which, together with *salli* or yoke-pins, yoke the cattle to the plough; the *mai* or the harrow, which is formed of bamboo, made up into the shape of a ladder, and united to the *joyāl* by means of a rope called the *neugrā*; on it the cultivator stands, thus using his weight as a means for breaking the clods; the *delāmār* or mallet of bamboo, for breaking large clods; the *kodāl*, a mattock used for digging; the *pāchan*, a spade or trowel used for weeding; the *kāchi* or the short sickle, used in the north of the district; the *kāidā* or the long sickle, used in Sherpur and Adamdīghi police circles; the *penti* or stick for driving cattle; the *kārāil* or hook, used for raking together grain at the time of treading out; the *kuliyā* or winnowing basket; the *gumāi* or muzzle woven of thin bamboo, and placed on the cattle, to prevent them from eating and injuring the crops; the *dāo*, a bill-hook for clearing jungle; the *kurāl* or short axe; the *dhenki* or mill for husking rice; the *dhāmā* or small basket for rice. In the east of the district, where the soil is very rich, and weeds spring up so quickly as to endanger the young crops, a large weeder called *nāngliā*, armed with bamboo or iron spikes, is drawn over the ground, in order to root them out. Most of the above implements and a pair of oxen or buffaloes are required for cultivating what is technically known as a plough of land, which is equivalent to about 4 or 5 acres for a pair of oxen, and to 6 or 7 acres for a pair of buffaloes. The capital required to purchase the implements and cattle necessary to cultivate a plough of land varies, according to the kind of oxen used, from Rs. 35 to Rs. 55. If buffaloes are employed the price is higher, being sometimes as much as Rs. 75.

No new implements or machine have been introduced except a few sugar-cane pressing mills used for extracting juice from canes.

Manures.

The manures used in the district are cow-dung and black mud obtained from ditches and the beds of old tanks and marshes. Oil-cake is also used to fair extent for special crops such as potatoes, sugar-cane, etc. The cultivators know something of green manuring also and in the *pali* tracts *san* is largely sown for fertilising the soil. Bone-meal and other artificial manures are not in use. There is room for a great deal of improvement in the conservation of all kinds of both green and animal manure.

Cattle.

The domestic animals used here for the purpose of agriculture are buffaloes and oxen. Cows are also sometimes employed in ploughing by Musalmāns, but even amongst them there is a prejudice against the practice. The local cattle are generally small, but a few buffaloes and large Bihār bullocks have been imported.

The indigenous pony is of an inferior breed and is chiefly used as a pack animal. The price per head of cattle of each class is noted below:—

Bullocks	...	...	Rs. 17	to Rs.	28
Cows	...	...	" 20	" "	30
Pony	...	...	" 40	" "	50
Buffalo	...	...	" 37	" "	40

There are no regular pasture grounds in the rains except in the *khāsmahāl*, but in most parts of the district the cattle find a sufficiency of grazing, though there is considerable difficulty in providing food for them in flooded tracts.

Agricultural and Land Improvement Loans

No use seems to have been made of the Land Improvement Loans Act in this district. A sum of Rs. 300 was advanced to an individual for the porpose of excavating a tank in 1897-98, but as the man did nothing, the amount was recovered from him in the same year.

There is usually no demand for agriculturists' loans in a good year. It is only when the people meet with a total failure of an important crop, such as jute or paddy, that they come forward to apply for such loans. The amounts of loans granted since 1896-97 are noted below:—

				Rs.
1896-97	...	...	...	208
1897-98	...	...	...	1,783
1905-06	...	...	...	1,000
1906-07	...	...	...	5,500

Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition.

An Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition was held annually in the *Sadr* Station of the district in the years 1905—07. In 1908 there was no exhibition owing to an outbreak of small-pox.

There are two main sections of the Exhibition—the Industrial and the Agricultural. A cattle show and a general cattle and miscellaneous *melā* were also organised last year in connection with the Exhibition.

The agricultural products exhibited are generally of very good quality, and appear to attract the attention of the agriculturists visiting the Exhibition. It is satisfactory to note that as a result of the last three years' exhibition, some new varieties of paddy as noted in a previous paragraph have been introduced in the district. Some local gentlemen are also making experiments with cotton.

Among the local manufactures, the one deserving of special mention is the silk cloth of Bogrā, which is said to be superior even to that of Murshidābād in durability. In the Exhibition held last year, five looms were set up for the instruction of weavers. Two came from Dacca and the other three from the Calcutta National School of Weaving. The Dacca loom turned out muslin and fine *sāris*. Of the Calcutta looms, one (Hattersly) showed *dhuti*-weaving, the second (fly-shuttle) chintzes, and the third carpet-weaving.

CHAPTER VI.

NATURAL CALAMITIES.

Liability to natural calamities.

The chief natural cause of failure of the harvest is drought. The portion of the district west of the Karatoyā, which contains rather more than three-fifths of the total area, is generally above flood level and depends on rain for its moisture. For these reasons, the rice crops of this region are liable to suffer from drought, which, however, does not occur often, and is rarely of any great extent.

The tract on the east of the Karatoyā river in *thānās* Shariākāndī and Dhunot is liable to be affected by excessive rainfall or flood. Sometimes also, but very rarely, the crops are damaged by locusts and insect pests.

Cyclone and Floods.

A terrible cyclone swept over the district on the 5th October 1864 from the south-east, destroying many houses and trees; it was accompanied by a high flood in the eastern *thānās*. A still higher flood occurred in 1886, when the extraordinary rainfall of 18 inches took place between the hours of 11-30 P.M. and 1 A.M. on the night of the 30th June. The town of Bogrā and the greater part of the district were flooded, and portions of the railway were swept away.

Earthquakes of 1885 and 1888.

The district has suffered much from earthquakes. A violent shock of earthquake was felt in this district on the morning of the 14th July 1885, injuring almost all the *pakkā* buildings, and causing great loss of property and some of life. The shock was followed by several others, though less violent. At Sherpur where there were several *pakkā* buildings, the whole town was in ruins. The number of deaths was 47. Of these 35 occurred at Sherpur, 4 at Bogrā, and 8 in other different places. In Bogrā town three persons were also injured. Most of the public buildings including the *Kachāri*, the circuit house, and the library were so cracked that they became practically unsafe and temporary sheds had to be raised for holding office. The earthquake of December 1888 also did considerable damage.

Earthquake of 1897.

An appalling earthquake, which was felt more or less throughout India, affected this district also with great violence in 1897. The shock was so severely felt in this district that to its inhabitants the memory of it is still as vivid in its associations of panic and terror as it was some years ago. The towns of Bogrā and Sherpur, as might be expected, suffered the most. Almost all the brick-built houses were either shaken down into heaps of ruins or seriously damaged; and that only two lives were lost in the district was due to the fortunate hour when the calamity occurred, and partly also to the habits of caution to which

successive earthquakes had accustomed the people. In Bogrā the Magistrate-Collector's bungalow, the Government offices, and the circuit house, have had to be entirely rebuilt. The house of Nawāb Saiad Abdus Subhan Chaudhuri at Mātidāli is still in ruins and that at Bogrā is not yet completely rebuilt.

Sherpur presented an even sadder spectacle, and as its prosperity has been steadily on the decline for years past, there is no hope of its ever regaining its former appearance.

While the two towns thus suffered, the earthquake appears in a strange way to have benefited the rest of the district. For although numerous fissures opened, and outpourings of sand and water occurred in the soft soil between the Karatoyā and Brahmaputra rivers, yet it is generally believed that this convulsion of nature has shaken the soil into greater fertility. Against this, however, is to be set the obstruction to communication caused by the upheaval of the beds of some rivers, especially that of the Karatoyā, and the damage done to roads and bridges.

Famine and scarcity. The Scarcity of 1866.

Within modern times there have been no famines properly so called, though there have been several years of scarcity. The first was that of 1866, contemporary with the Orissa famine. The scarcity in Bogrā was partly due to the very unseasonable weather during the previous year. The rainfall of June and July was excessive, that of August insufficient. By the 15th September, or some weeks before the ordinary time, the rains practically ceased. The paddy crop in the western portion of the district was injuriously affected. The price of rice went up to 7½ seers per rupee, or three times its ordinary price. The failure of the crops in Bogrā would hardly, however, have caused serious scarcity but that large quantities of rice were exported and thereby the food supply was diminished to a dangerous degree. In Bogrā town the price of rice was a little lower, but it would have gone higher, had not a European resident imported 5,000 maunds of rice and retailed it to the poorer classes. There were no relief operations on the part of Government, and except in the way of public charity, no steps were taken to help the poor. No deaths from starvation were reported and no application for remission of revenue made.

The Scarcity of 1874.

The second great scarcity occurred in 1874, and was caused by a similar but much greater failure of the crops, due in part to an equally premature cessation of the rains; but also to their general scantiness during the year. The average rainfall of the four years 1871—74 had been 73·89 inches, the rainfall of 1865 was 80·2, and that of 1873, 37·13 or 47 inches less than the normal fall. In 1874, the alarm was raised by the District Officials two or three months before the winter crop was cut, so that the peasantry were alive to the danger that was imminent, and accordingly preserved for their own consumption whatever grain they were able to save by artificial irrigation or other means. It is probable that no part of Government

action during the famine was attended with better results than the manner in which the whole country was kept informed of the actual and possible extent of the failure in each district.

About the middle of March, Sir Richard Temple, the Famine Commissioner, visited the district and marched through some of the worst parts of it, and recorded in his minute—"I consider, having regard to all the circumstances, that 240,000 *mans* ought to be provided for this district, of which 50,000 *mans* have been already ordered, leaving 190,000 *mans* remaining. Out of the 50,000 *mans* ordered, 20,000 *mans* have arrived. No time should be lost in bringing up fresh supplies, as the amount in hand is small as compared with the extent of possible distress." During April and May the scarcity increased, but not in any very alarming degree. In no part of the correspondence about this time is anything approaching famine described, or the word famine used. There was undoubtedly considerable pressure felt in the backward parts of the district, such as the police division of Pānchbībī and the western jungle tracts of Sherpur. The following report of the Collector, dated the 1st June 1874, describes the position when the scarcity was at its worst:—"I have travelled a good deal in the interior during the fortnight and from ocular observation I am in a position to say that in no place which I visited was the condition of the country or the people such as to cause very great anxiety; although, undoubtedly, the great price of food must have inflicted hardship and some hunger on the very poor. The price of food everywhere is high, as will be seen from the following quotations, which represent almost accurately the *bāzār* rates down to this day, giving the number of *pakkā* seers per rupee at which rice was selling during the last fortnight:—Bogrā town, 9½ to 10½ seers; Dhupchānchiā, 10½ seers; Pānchbībī, 9 seers; Khetlāl, 10½ seers; Sherpur, 7½ seers; Sibganj, 9 to 10½ seers. Notwithstanding the great dearness, which must cause pinching to very many, I cannot say that I anywhere observed upon the persons of the people signs of hunger or of deficient sustenance. Men, women and children have an appearance of being sufficiently nourished. Everywhere the village *bāzārs* were adequately supplied with food, although at very high rates. Wherever I have been, I have found the people, with few exceptions, in their usual state, although it is universally said that if Government had given no help there would have been great distress. Nowhere have I observed any general depression. There is certainly no difficulty in getting food for any one who has money to buy it. The very poor must be straitened, but measures for their relief are in full operation, and they have not been slow to take advantage of them."

"One of the great features in the relief works is the small number of able-bodied labourers seen upon them, and the crowds of women, generally old, and children. The piece system is applied to the able-bodied men, and not to the women and

children, who may be found squatting in thousands along the roads and engaged, when they are doing anything, in gently tapping the surface of them with bamboo sticks."

On the 27th July the Collector was able to report that the scarcity was substantially at an end. "Ever since I came to the district," he says, "it has been my good fortune to report to the Government, fortnight after fortnight, that the state of the country was getting better and better; that the condition of the people was improving; that the rainfall had been propitious; that the season was favourable; that the growing of crops were all that could be desired; all the *bāzārs* were well supplied with food-grains; and that the price of rice was steadily falling everywhere."

Mr. A. P. Macdonnell (now Lord Macdonnell) in his report on "Famine Relief in Bihār and Bengal" published two years after, gives the following succinct and authoritative description of the scarcity of 1874:—"Notwithstanding the great deficiency in the rainfall the out-turn of the rice crop was not so poor as might be expected. A large portion of the Bogrā district lies low and is studded over with marshes which retain water, and thus admit of irrigation being practised. Much good was done in this way in 1873, and the otherwise inevitable incidence of the failure mitigated in those parts. The results of a careful examination of the country are embodied in the Collector's report of 4th December. It is there stated that in the west of *thānā* Bogrā and in *thānās* Adamdīghī, Bādalgāchhi, Khetlāl and Pānchbībī, an area of about 700 square miles, the average out-turn was seven-sixteenth, while in the rest of the district, an area of about 800 square miles, the out-turn was only three-sixteenth of an average crop. It would be fair to assume three-eighths of an averge crop as the out-turn of the rice harvest in Bogrā in 1873. This extensive failure in the main food staple of the district immediately affected prices. In January 1874, the price of rice had risen to 13½ seers for the rupee, that is two and a half times the normal rate, and this dearness of the market continued, though with growing intensity, until the end of June. It does not seem to have been affected by the yield of the cold weather crops, which, in Bogrā, are not usually of much importance. The highest rates prevailed in June when rice in the Sherpur *thānā* sold for 7½ seers and in other *thānās* 9 seers for the rupee. Up till June, only twenty-two tons of Government grain had been sold in the district, but when prices touched these prohibitive rates it was more freely offered for sale. In July, the markets assumed an easier tone, and in the end of August the ripening of an abundant crop of early rice terminated the greater portion of the people's difficulties." The expenditure of grain and money incurred in the relief and prevention of distress in Bogrā was as under:—2,549 tons of grain gratuitously distributed, 1,834 tons sold for cash, 2,386 tons advanced on loan and 813 tons paid as wages. Moreover,

Rs. 56,440 were expended in charitable relief; Rs. 2,58,111 in wages of labour, and Rs. 53,998 in recoverable loans. The number of persons charitably relieved rose from nine thousand in May to twenty thousand in the beginning of June, but fell again to the same level in the end of the month. The daily average of labourers employed on relief works was eight thousand in March, twenty-nine thousand in April, forty-five thousand in May, seventeen thousand in June and eight thousand in July, after which this form of relief was closed.

Failure of crops in 1895-96 and 1896-97.

During the successive years 1895-96 and 1896-97 the rainfall was again deficient, and the consequence was that the rice crops greatly suffered. The drought of 1896-97 following upon that of the previous year strained the resources of the people to the utmost. There was actual scarcity however only in the portion of the district east of the Karatoyā in *thānās* Shariākāndi and Dhunot, and a famine charitable relief fund had to be opened towards the close of the year. One hundred and forty-two applications for loans under the Agriculturists' Loans Act were received, and Rs. 1,991 were lent to the applicants in 27 cases. The distress, however, was not very acute, as jute gave a good out-turn. The effect of the scarcity was also felt to some extent during 1897-98.

Failure of crops in 1905-06.

Owing to the unusually heavy fall of rain during 1905-06, especially in August and September, and subsequent floods, both jute and paddy in low *pali* lands in the eastern part of the district were damaged to a great extent. In the western part also the young plants of winter rice on low lands were submerged and damaged, though less seriously. There was some rain during February and March which benefited certain *rabi* crops, but generally speaking all crops suffered more or less owing to the unfavourable distribution of rainfall, and the result was that the year was one of difficulty for the cultivators. Other classes also suffered owing to the rise in the price of rice. Loans under the Agriculturists' Loans Act, to the extent of Rs. 6,500, had to be given to the most needy people. Most of the *zamīndārs* of the district, specially the Rājā of Dighāpatiyā, the Munshi *zamīndārs* of Sherpur, and the *zamīndārs* of Tarās, helped their *rāiyats*, either by advancing small sums of money to them or keeping the collection of their rents in abeyance. Rs. 1,680 were also collected by subscription for distribution as charity among the poorer classes, and of this sum Rs. 1,050 were actually distributed.

Tracts liable to famine.

The portion of the district to the west of the Karatoyā river comprised in the *thānās* of Bogrā, Sherpur, Sibganj, Khetlāl and Adamdīghi and partly also in *thānā* Pānchbībī is most liable to suffer from failure of the rice crop. This tract, which has an area of 720 square miles and a population of about 432,000 souls, or 600 to the square mile, was affected in the famine of 1874. The soil is a hard clay locally known as *khiār*, and is fit for growing

rice only ; but of this, with seasonable rainfall, an abundant crop is generally reaped. In ordinary years the rice produced is fully sufficient to maintain its existing population in comfort. But cultivation in this portion depends entirely upon rainfall, canal and well irrigation is unknown, and most of the irrigation tanks are now choked with weed and silted up. So, when the rains fail, the people have nothing to fall back upon and the rice withers. Fortunately the rainfall is generally abundant.

The tract is well supplied with roads. The northern section of the Eastern Bengal State Railway runs along the western border and the Brahmaputra-Sāntāhār Branch Railway line passes through the middle of the tract.

CHAPTER VII.

ECONOMIC AND AGRARIAN POSITION.

General aspect of the industrial organisation.

Out of the total population of the Bogrā district, no less than 748,000 persons or 87·5 per cent. are dependent on agriculture; while of the remainder, 6·4 per cent. are supported by industries, 0·4 by commerce, and 1·1 by professions. In the whole province of Bengal, out of every 1,000 persons there were, at the last census, 715 dependent on agriculture, whereas in Northern Bengal 803 or approximately four-fifths of the population were engaged in agricultural pursuits.

The agricultural population of the district is scattered over the level plains of the district in small villages, and in almost every village is to be found representatives of three distinct classes. The first of these are the landlords. Though the landlord, or even his *gomastā*, may not be present in every village, yet the land upon which the industry of the village is expended belongs either to an individual landlord or landlords, or to a group of relations, who constitute a body of joint proprietors. Next to them are the petty farmers or cultivators, who constitute the largest of the three classes; these men rent from the landlord small parcels of land over which they usually have acquired rights of occupancy. The third and last class is made up of such landless persons, who work as labourers in the fields of their more fortunate neighbours, and such artisans as the carpenter, the blacksmith, and the potter, who assist agriculture by making or repairing agricultural tools or supplying the domestic wants of the agricultural population. To this class also belong the village servants who perform the menial offices of the village. Although the persons in this last category follow a variety of occupations, the whole class is relatively small, because there are few villages so large as to demand the services of more than one carpenter or potter and the number of landless classes in most villages is also very small. "These different classes are bound together by the solidarity of their interests. But solidarity of interest is not incompatible with competition, and in an Indian village there are the same motives which prompt men to pursue their economic interest as in all industrial communities." *

Landlords.

The Permanent Settlement has given the landlords permanent rights over their *zamīndāri*, and the revenue payable to Government has also been fixed in perpetuity.

* Mr. Theodore Morison's Industrial Organisation of an Indi n Province, p. 13.

The incidence of land revenue on the income of the *zamīndārs* is comparatively light in this district. The largest landowner is the Rājā of Dighāpatiyā. His collections in 1907 were over 2 lakhs of rupees, but the land revenue payable by him amounts to Rs. 18,013 only. The Nawāb of Bogrā who pays a land revenue of Rs. 21,000 collects over a lakh from his tenantry. The gross rental of the district comes to Rs. 21,01,176 and the land revenue to Rs. 4,91,641, or Rs. 6,07,685 including the cesses. Thus the rental is nearly 3½ times as large as the land revenue and cesses, and the landowning classes have to pay to Government on an average less than a third of their income. The rental of the district, when a valuation for the assessment of road and public works cess was first made, was Rs. 12,57,981 and it has now increased to Rs. 21,11,484. Extension of cultivation and the consequent reclamation of waste lands owing to the growth of population, and the great rise in the value of agricultural produce, have been the two principal causes, which have brought about the great increase in the income from landed property in recent years; and it is the *zamīndārs* who as a class have appropriated most of this unearned increment from the soil. Consequently the value of landed property has enormously increased in this as in other districts of Bengal. A *zamīndāri* is now sold at 30 times its annual income, *i.e.*, the aggregate of the collections minus the land revenue payable. Some 20 or 30 years ago its value was calculated at about 15 or 20 times the annual income. **Their advantageous position.**

Subinfeudation of proprietary interest has gone on in the Bogrā district as in other parts of Bengal and, in so far as this has been done by superior *zamīndārs*, they have excluded themselves, by the creation of permanent under-tenures, from a large share of the prospective augmentation of the rental of their estates. But the creation of subordinate under-tenures has not been the only cause of the alienation of the original *zamīndārs* and their families from the ownership of the soil. Owing to the inelastic character of the Government demand the large estates of the time of the Permanent Settlement were speedily broken up and subdivided into a large number of smaller ones, the purchasers of which succeeded to the proprietary rights of the original holders. The whole of the present district of Bogrā practically belonged to three *zamīndārs* at the time of the Permanent Settlement. There are no records to show how these original *zamīndāris* were split up; but in 1885, when figures were collected for the Famine Commissioners to show the average size of revenue-paying estates and tenures, it was found that there were no less than 699 revenue-paying estates in the district, out of which 453 had a rental of Rs. 100 and above, and 246, a rental of less than Rs. 100. Similarly, out of the 4,276 tenures, 1,003 had a rental of over Rs. 100, while as many as 3,273 had a rental of less than Rs. 100. Again, of the total number of the tenures of the district, 3,990 or over 93 per **Subinfeudation.**

cent. are held direct from the *zamīndārs*, while 193 have been subinfeuded to the first degree, and 93 to the second. Subinfeudation in this district has therefore been comparatively rare.

Their relation with *rāiyats.*

The richest *zamīndārs* are, all as a rule, absentees from the district, but on the whole their relations with the *rāiyats* are most harmonious. In periods of stress and difficulty the *zamīndārs* have been known to come to the rescue of their tenants, either by remitting rents altogether or by deferring collections till a more favourable season comes. During the scarcity of 1905-06 the Tarās *zamīndārs* advanced about Rs. 20,000 to their *rāiyats* and the Sherpur Munshis also helped their *rāiyats* in the same way.

It is to be regretted, however, that the *zamīndārs* have not, either individually or collectively, helped any industrial enterprise, nor have they undertaken any large works for the improvement of the condition of their *rāiyats.*

Peasant proprietors with occupancy rights.

After the landowners we have to consider the cultivators, and in this district, as in other parts of Eastern Bengal, the landowning cultivator is the most numerous as well as the most important factor in the production of the agricultural wealth of the country. This class is made up of the smaller landholders (*jotdārs*, tenure-holders, etc.), and the ordinary *rāiyat* with occupancy rights. The percentage of *rāiyats* with occupancy rights appears to be very large. From information gathered from the different *zamīndārs*, it appears that over 90 per cent. of the *rāiyats* have occupancy rights. The occupancy holdings are heritable and transferable for all practical purposes.

The following figures also collected for the Famine Commissioners in 1885 show the average rental of the holdings of occupancy *rāiyats* and give some idea of their relative material prosperity. The total number of *rāiyati* holdings in the district paying more than Rs. 100 as rental was 66; those paying between Rs. 50 and Rs. 100 numbered 995; between Rs. 20 and Rs. 50, 11,323; between Rs. 5 and Rs. 20, 53,356; less than Rs. 5, 69,629. Thus nearly 90 per cent. of the *rāiyats'* holdings had a rental of less than Rs. 20.

The cultivator without occupancy rights.

Below the landowning *rāiyat* is the under-*rāiyat* cultivating the land of another *rāiyat* as a sub-tenant, either as a *korfā rāiyat* with some settled rights, or as an *ādhi rāiyat*, who in this district does not appear to have any settled rights at all. The number of this class of cultivators is not very large for the district as a whole, but a good many are found in the eastern tracts, and according to the settlement report of the Jaipur *khās mahāl* they seem to be fairly numerous in the north-western part of the district also. It is reported that the *rāiyats* make very little ceremony in the *khās mahāl* in ousting the *korfās*, as according to the law, these men cannot acquire any occupancy right except by local custom, and there is no local custom in the *khās mahāl* allowing them to acquire such rights. These *korfā* under-*rāiyats*

however, it is stated, are precisely the same class of men as their landlords, and the difference in their position is due solely to the fact that they do not possess holdings paying rent directly to Government. As a matter of fact, a few years back when land was plentiful and labour very limited, the *rāiyats* were very glad to get their under-tenants to help them to bring their holdings under cultivation. But with the increased demand for land, the under-*rāiyat's* position has changed and they are now almost reduced to the status of tenants-at-will.

Increase of under *rāiyats* in the district.

Taking the district as a whole, there is evidence to show that there is a tendency towards a gradual increase in the number of under-*rāiyats* without any permanent interest in the soil which they cultivate. In the five estates selected for revaluation in 1906-07 the returns show that 116 *rāiyats* have sublet parts of their holdings to 237 under-*rāiyats*. At the previous revaluation for the same five estates only 64 *rāiyats* were shown to have sublet their holdings to 127 under-*rāiyats*.

The operation of the Tenancy Act.

The relations of landlords and their tenants are now regulated by the Tenancy Act. The working of this Act has led to highly satisfactory results in this district. As remarked by Mr. Skrine in his note on the material condition of the lower classes, "the Tenancy Act has inspired the *rāiyat* with a new-born sense of right and steeled him to resist oppression. The effect of the Act has been strictly conservative, tending to allay and not excite misunderstanding." From an economic point of view, the great value of the Tenancy Act (and its predecessor, Act X of 1859) consists in the fact that it has saved the *rāiyats* from being rack-rented by their landlords, and by placing a limitation to the extent to which rent can be enhanced within a definite period, it has enabled the cultivator to appropriate to a great extent the increased value of agricultural products. As a rule, however, landlords secure enhancement of rents by coming to an agreement with their *rāiyats*, without having recourse to law courts Since the passing of the Tenancy Act, there has been only one application in this district for settlement of fair rents under section 105 of the Act.

Rates of rent.

In 1872, the Collector of Bogrā, made a detailed report on this subject to the Government, from which the following paragraphs in the last *Gazetteer* are condensed:—

"The district naturally divides itself into three tracts consisting of jungly lands to the north-west; higher rice-land to the west of the Karatoyā, and a low alluvial tract between the Karatoyā and the Dāokobā."

"The first tract comprises the police circle to the north-west of the district, Pānchbībī. Comparing the maximum and minimum rates of rent of this tract with those in the centre of the district, striking variations do not appear. The minimum rates, however, are more common in the north-west or jungle tract, where squatters who clear jungle are allowed not only land free of all rent for three years, but also advances without interest. Land is

so plentiful that when the landholders begin to demand rent, these clearers frequently move off and begin to clear afresh elsewhere. The prevailing rates are:—Land producing late rice or *āman*, 4 annas to Rs. 2 per *bighā*; land producing early rice or *āus*, 4 annas to Re. 1-8-0 per *bighā*; land suitable for the cultivation of sugar-cane or *ikshu*, 8 annas to Rs. 2 per *bighā*; for the cultivation of mustard, 4 annas to Rs. 2 per *bighā*; for the production of ordinary species of vegetables, 4 annas to Rs. 2 per *bighā*; for turmeric, 11 annas to Rs. 2 per *bighā*; for jute, 11 annas to Rs. 2 per *bighā*.

"The second tract includes the police divisions of Sibganj, Khetlāl, and Adamdīghi, together with so much of Bogrā and Sherpur as lies to the west of the Karatoyā. This tract is as a whole clear and open. The soil is called *khiār*, and is a kind of clay. It is admirably adapted for growing the finer kinds of *āman* rice. There is a good deal of mulberry-land in the neighbourhood of the head-quarters town, where there was a considerable silk filature. There are a good many *pān* gardens in this neighbourhood, and the cultivation of jute has been on the increase of late. The following rates are current in this tract:—For land producing late rice or *āman*, 3 annas to Rs. 2 per *bighā*; land producing early rice or *āus*, 3 annas to Re. 1-8-0 per *bighā*; land suitable for the cultivation of sugar-cane or *ikshu*, Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per *bighā*; for the cultivation of mustard, 7 annas to Rs. 2 per *bighā*; for the cultivation of mulberry, Rs. 2-4-0 to Rs. 4 per *bighā*; for the production of the ordinary species of vegetables, 8 annas to Rs. 2 per *bighā*; for *pān* gardens, Rs. 2 to Rs 5 per *bighā*; for jute, 10 annas to Rs. 2 per *bighā*.

"The third or eastern tract embraces the whole of Shariākāndi and Dhunot and those parts of Bogrā and Sherpur which lie to the east of the Karatoyā. The country is of a very different description to that on the west of the river. The soil is called *pali*, and is a rich alluvial deposit. The principal crops are *bunā āman*, or rice of a coarse quality, sown broadcast on land where the plant grows as the water deepens; *āus* or early rice, to a less extent on the higher lands; jute in large quantity; and mustard toward the Dāokobā or eastern boundary of the district. The rates are nearly the same here as in the other two tracts of the district. Jute, however, takes a wider range in rent. The current rates are:—For land producing early rice or *āus*, 4 annas to Rs. 2 per *bighā*; for land producing late rice or *āman*, 5 annas to Rs. 2 per *bighā*; for land suitable for the cultivation of mustard, 5 annas to Rs. 2 per *bighā*; for the production of ordinary species of vegetables, 5 annas to Rs. 2 per *bighā*."

Enquiries instituted in different parts of the district now disclose that there has hardly been any increase in the maximum rates of rent for different classes of land over those which prevailed in 1872, although the minimum rate in most cases has slightly advanced. Some classes of *khod* land are now rented

for more than Rs. 4, and in parts of Adamdīghi they have gone up in some cases to Rs. 7 per annum. There has also been an increase in the rents of *bālukā* and *shāri* lands, which are now generally Re. 1 per *bighā* instead of annas 12. In some cases *shāri* or *pālān* lands, used for producing vegetables, pay as much as Rs. 3 per *bighā*. Lands used for *bānsh* (bamboo) also pay a high rent of Rs. 3 per *bighā*. Some *pān baraj* lands now pay as much as Rs. 16 per *bighā*, although the general rate still continues to be the same as in 1872. It should be noted that the classification of land into *khod*, *gol*, etc., applies principally to the central part of the district, whereas the following classification prevails in the eastern and north-western parts, *viz.* :—

Kandar or *Awāl*—1st class, carrying rent of Re. 1-8-0 per *bighā* ; *Nīm* or *Doem*—2nd class, rented at Re. 1-4-0 per *bighā* ; *Tāti* or *Soem*—3rd class, let at Re. 1 per *bighā* ; *Bālukā* or *Chakaram*—let at annas 12 per *bighā* ; Jungle *patit*—annas 8 per *bigha*. In the settlement of the Jaipur Government estates completed in 1897-98 *bāstu* land was settled at from Rs. 2 to Re. 1 per *bighā* ; low lands of the first class from Re. 1-8-0 to annas 10 per *bighā* ; 2nd class, Re. 1-8-0 to 8 annas per *bighā* ; 3rd and 4th classes, 12 annas to 4 annas per *bighā*. For high land, first class lands were settled at Re. 1-4-0 to annas 8 per *bighā* ; 2nd class, Re. 1 to annas 7 per *bighā* ; 3rd and 4th classes, 8 annas to 4 annas per *bighā*. Fallow and waste land was settled at annas 6 to annas 4 per *bighā*. It is stated in the settlement report that in the matter of rent, under-*rāiyats* are generally worse off than *rāiyats* and have to pay considerably higher rates. The Settlement Officer noticed in some cases rates as high as Rs. 6, Rs. 7 or even Rs. 10 per acre.

The following account occurs in the last *Gazetteer* :—

Abwābs or customary cesses.

"It is impossible to tell the origin of these cesses, but they are very old, dating back long before the time when the English assumed the administration of Bengal. They are of the same nature as the innumerable *dasturis* or perquisites, which are levied by men of nearly every position and rank of life in the country. In cases connected with the land, they are usually forced complimentary gifts or benevolences, but some are from their nature a part of the rent. Many of these illegal demands are still in force."

In 1872 the Collector made the following report on this subject :—" The principal exaction here is known as *bhikshyā*, benevolence, and takes the form of a percentage on the authorised rental. It is, I believe, almost universal. *Bhikshyā* is not levied every year, but for the most part every alternate year. It ranges from 25 to 100 per cent. on the rental. If the percentage be moderate, and the demand not too frequently repeated, it is paid without much objection. If it be too oppressive, the *rāiyats* bring charges of unlawful assembly, wrongful confinement, and the like, against the agents of the *zamīndār*, at the same

time depositing their rents in Court. They very rarely, as far as I know, go to the Revenue Courts to recover sums paid in excess of their dues. Another very general cess, I understand, is the *grām kharchā*, or 'village defence fund.' This is a fund ostensibly raised to meet any expenditure in the nature of criminal law charges which may arise in connection with a village, but is mostly employed for such purposes as giving gratifications to police officers who come to hold inquiries. It averages about 2 annas per rupee. *Zamīndāri dāk* cess is almost universally paid by the *rāiyats* to the *zamīndār* at the traditional rate of $3\frac{1}{8}$ per cent. *Bāttā*, or discount at 5 pice per rupee, on payment of rent in Company's rupees, can perhaps hardly be called a cess. The oldest rents were fixed in *sikkā* rupees, and when the Company's rupees became current, discount was naturally demanded from the *rāiyats*; and for the sake of uniformity of accounts, new leases, though the rent is expressed in Company's rupees, are almost always charged with discount. Since this custom is nearly universal, there seems to be no fraud in it, for it would be just as easy for a *zamīndār* to frame a new lease at a proportionately larger rental in Company's rupees, and exact no discount; where, however, discount is charged in a recently settled estate, it is clearly an inequitable cess. *Tahri*, probably short for *tahriri*, is, I hear, pretty uniformly levied, as cost of writing accounts and receipts at the rate of 1 pice per rupee; *Zabt rāi* is a charge on pretence of measurement expenses, at a similar rate. Income-tax is levied by some *zamīndārs* as such, while others only ask the more *bhikshyā*, on account of their liability to pay income-tax."

"Of the equally general but occasional cesses, the principal are the following:—*Bibāha kharchā*, or contributions on the marriage of the *zamīndār* or his relatives; *Srāddha kharchā*, similar contributions on the occasion of a funeral in the *zamīndār's* family; *Pūjā pārbani*, contributions to the expenses of the Durgā *pūjā* ceremonies at the *zamīndār's* house; *Nazar*, a money present when a *rāiyat* visits the *zamīndār*; *āgamani*, a similar payment, still, however, on the *rāiyats'* part, when the *zamīndār* visits his estate. The rates of the last five cesses are variable. *Ijārādāri* is a partial cess, levied, as the name implies, in those estates only, which are let in farm to the use and benefit of the lessee. It ranges from 6 pice to 4 annas per rupee."

As there has been no general settlement of the district, it is impossible to say to what extent the levy of these irregular charges is still practised in Bogrā. But I think most of these exactions have now disappeared, except occasional *bhikshyā* or *nazars* to the *zamīndārs*, once perhaps in ten years when the *zamīndār* visits his estate, or on such exceptional occasions as a marriage or a *srāddha* in the *zamīndār's* family. The *nāibs* and other servants of course still realise their own perquisites or *tahri* from the *rāiyats*, especially on such occasions as the sale or purchase of a

holding. As a rule, complaints from *rāiyats*, on the score of illegal exactions by *zamīndārs* are not heard of.

Prices and wages of labouring classes.

As already described, the number of landless persons in a village is comparatively small, and when the farmers do not do most of the work themselves, migratory labour is chiefly employed. A number of coolies usually come from Rājshāhi, Murshidābād and Nadiā districts. A fair number of up-country coolies also come from Bihār. Bengali coolies are now paid in cash at daily rates of annas 5 to annas 8 without food, and annas 3 to annas 5½ daily with food. When the arrangement is to pay monthly, the rate is generally from Rs. 7 to Rs. 9 without food and from Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 with food. The annual rate is from Rs. 36 to Rs. 50 with food. In most cases the pay is advanced to the servant. There are no permanent hereditary servants in this district. Of skilled labourers, a superior mason now earns a rupee and a common mason 8 annas per day. A superior carpenter also earns a rupee a day, and a blacksmith annas 8, whereas a thatcher earns from annas 5 to annas 7 a day. The above refer exclusively to rates for rural labourers. For urban areas the rates are appreciably greater. A common coolie in Bogrā town earns from annas 8 to annas 12 a day in the busy season. The earnings of a railway coolie come to about Re. 1 to Re. 1-8-0 in the jute season, and are scarcely less than 10 or 12 annas in all seasons of the year. Though wages and prices have greatly increased within recent years, the latter seem to have increased more than the former, for we find in 1871, that agricultural labourers earned from 2½ to 3 annas per diem besides their food. Thatchers earned 3 annas a day, bricklayers from 4 to 5 annas, and smiths and carpenters from 5 to 6 annas a day. In 1854, the rates for coolies and day labourers were 1 to 1½ annas per diem; for bricklayers the same; smiths and carpenters were paid 3 to 4 annas a day. In 1871 the ordinary *bāzār* rate for best cleaned rice was 20 seers, and for common cleaned rice, known as *motā chāul* and used by all the humbler classes, was 32 seers and 5 chittaks per rupee. In 1854, the prices of these articles are said to have been generally half of the above rates. In 1860, prices had advanced 50 per cent. on the rates of 1854. Between 1893 and 1900, prices ranged from 13 to 20 seers per rupee, but since 1901 prices have varied from 7 to 15 seers for the rupee for common rice, which would formerly have been considered almost famine rates.

Material condition of the cultivating classes. Factors of progress.

The district of Bogrā is situated in one of the most fertile tracts in the most fertile province of India. Severe and widespread droughts are practically unknown, and there is no record of any such serious and long continued interruption of agricultural industry, which leads to famine, except perhaps the scarcity of 1874. The climate of the district is healthier than that of any other part of central Bengal and is not unsuited to the growth of a virile agricultural population. During the last 20 years the population

has increased by more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. during each decade. Facilities of communication have steadily improved, till at the present day, Bogrā is one of the most accessible districts both by rail and by water in Bengal. The main Eastern Bengal State Railway from Sārā to Siliguri passes through the north-western part of the district and taps the great rice-producing tracts in Adamdīghi and Panchbībī.

The Brahmaputra-Sāntāhār Branch Railway, opened in 1899 and completed in 1901, passes through almost the centre of the district and connects it with the Assam districts by rail, and also by steamer *viâ* Fulchari, which is a steamer ghāt. On the borders of the district there are steamer ghāts where the Assam Service steamers stop on their way to and from Assam and Calcutta. The advent of the railway has not only opened more distant markets for the products of the agriculturists of the district, but has also created quite a number of new local markets at important railway stations, such as Jaipur Hāt, Hilli, Sonātolā. The price of agricultural produce, especially that of rice and jute, has risen to an abnormal degree within recent years, while the rate of rent has not been enhanced to any appreciable extent. All the above causes, but pre-eminently the great growth of the jute industry, have tended directly to improve the material condition of the agricultural classes, and on the whole there can be no question that during the last 25 years the standard of living and comfort of the cultivators has greatly improved.

Causes which impede progress.

That the rate of progress has not been more rapid than it has actually been the case is due to contervailing causes, which to some extent impede the progress of all agricultural communities in India. The foremost of these is the want of education amongst the cultivating classes, and a consequent want of forethought and frugality. The want of any suitable Bank for the deposits of their savings, and a blind adherence to custom lead *rāiyats* to hoard their savings and keep their money buried under ground, instead of investing it in profitable undertakings. But perhaps one of the most potent factors in restraining the rise of the *rāiyat's* standard of comfort is his extreme proneness to litigation, and the influence which the village tout exercises over him. The districts of Dinājpur, Rangpur and Bogrā are notorious for their village touts, and no reform would be more beneficial than the extirpation of these baneful parasites. Finally the cultivator has to contend against periodical visits of natural calamities. Though more fortunate than his fellow agriculturists in other parts of India yet, from the very nature of the case, the agriculturists of this district also cannot hope for complete immunity from temporary interruptions of agricultural industry from droughts and other causes. And when the rainy day comes, and the *rāiyat* on account of the failure of his crops has to fall back on his past savings, very often it is found that he has made no provision for

such an emergency. It is on these occasions that the want of facile and cheap credit still further deepens the entanglements of the *rāiyat*. If he could borrow money at reasonable rates of interest, and if Banks existed to help him with comparatively cheap credit to tide over such temporary difficulties, the material condition of the agriculturist would to-day be far more satisfactory than it is.

But taking all the forces that are in his favour and those that are against him, the balance is decidedly on the side of the *rāiyat*, and his progress though slow has been steady within the last 20 years. The great rise in the value of agricultural occupancy holdings is a sure proof of the advancing prosperity of the agriculturist. The holding which, about 15 or 20 years ago sold for Rs. 10 per *bighā* cannot now be obtained for less than Rs. 30 to Rs. 50 per *bighā*. Even for this price the land must be considered to be cheap, for in an average year the profit from the yield from one *bighā* of jute land after paying all expenses of cultivation comes approximately to Rs. 14 and that of paddy land to Rs. 10, whereas the rent, which is paid for the best land for such crops, is on an average only Re. 1-8-0 per *bighā*. So at a proper valuation land should fetch considerably more than it does.

Estimates of the income and expenditure of an average family.

In the former *Gazetteer* an estimate is made of the expenses and resources of an average Musalman farmer with a holding of 30 *bighās* or 10 acres. The rent of the land is calculated to come to Rs. 37-8-0. The house he lives in costs him Rs. 42-8-0. His family consisting of a wife, two children and a widowed sister, together with another dependent relative, consume 2,920 seers of rice in the year and this costs him Rs. 104. Seed costs him Rs. 17-8-0. Other articles of food, such as fish, milk and spices together with such luxuries as tobacco come to another Rs. 20 per year. His total expenditure comes to something like Rs. 216-8-0 a year. His total income derived entirely from his farm was found to be Rs. 250. Allowance being made for any interest, which the farmer might have to pay and the cost of educating the children for three or four years, the conclusion arrived at was that, if he were provident such a farmer could put by from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 a year, and if he were wise he might save as much as Rs. 40.

Mr. Skrine collected the following figures for districts in North Bengal * :—" A substantial cultivator with a holding of 8·3 acres; produce 9,033 lbs. of rice, worth Rs. 311: cold weather crops sown on lands which have already given early rice, Rs. 20. Profits from hiring out a cart and pair of bullocks, Rs. 30; sale of milk and curds, Rs. 60. Gross income Rs. 421. Deduct rent at Rs. 3-12-0 per acre, Rs. 31-4-0; and hired labour Rs. 24; total Rs. 55-4-0. Net income Rs. 365-12-0. He had no debts, and his movable property consisted of five bullocks worth

* Memorandum on the Material Condition of Lower Orders in Bengal, 1882 -1891, by F. H. B. Skrine, I.C.S., 1892, pages (14 15).

Rs. 75, three milk-cows Rs. 35, one cart Rs. 10, gold and silver ornaments Rs. 60 and brass vessels Rs. 6. His family of eight had three good meals a day of rice, pulse, fish and curds. In the case of six other families on the same estate the income ranged between Rs. 126 and Rs. 113; and all save one used brass vessels for eating and possessed silver ornaments. The debts in these cases were Rs. 20, Rs. 41, Rs. 45 and Rs. 60."

Similarly for the *khās mahāl* of Jaipur, the Settlement Officer illustrated the material condition of a *rāiyat* with a holding of 10 *bighās* (or 3½ acres) and with a family of five persons, three adults and two children. The cost of maintaining such a family was estimated at Rs. 144 and his total income from his farm, from rice, jute and miscellaneous crops, deducting the cost of cultivation and the wear and tear of cattle and machinery, was calculated at Rs. 158-6-0, leaving a balance of Rs. 14-6-0 only from which he has to pay his rents and meet other incidental expenses.

But not much reliance can be placed on these calculations, in which, as has justly been remarked, some important items are left out and the remainder taken on supposition. And taking the cultivating classes as a whole the following opinion of Mr. Toynbee, I.C.S., recorded for the Famine Commissioners (1885) seems to be still true:—

"It may be safely assumed that those *rāiyats*, who pay less than Rs. 5 per annum for their holding, supplement their resources by service or by labour of some kind, whether at home, or in the fields, or on public or private works. They would in time of famine or scarcity be the next, after the purely landless classes to resort to such works as were opened by the State. *Rāiyats* paying between Rs. 5 and Rs. 20 would, as a rule, be more or less dependent on State help according to the circumstances of the season, and the severity of the failure of crop. All those paying over Rs. 20 may be fairly said to be able to take care of themselves, but they form but a very small part of the whole."

Rise in the standard of living.

There can be no question, however, that a great advance has been made in the material prosperity of the agricultural classes. The thatched dwelling houses are gradually making room for houses with roofs of corrugated iron. A good jute year is now generally followed by an increase in the number of such houses. The houses too are more elaborately furnished than before. Most well-to-do *rāiyats* have sitting rooms with benches, chairs and a *takta posh* in them. Their wearing apparel, shoes, umbrellas, caps, all indicate growing prosperity. The females have numerous silver ornaments, and in the case of higher classes of cultivators and *jotdārs*, gold ornaments are not uncommon. It is also notorious that expensive fish and other articles of food are bought up by the cultivating classes at the markets and fairs. The increasing number of ponies owned by the *rāiyats* is also an indication of their growing wealth.

Position of men with fixed money incomes.

But the rapid rise in the price of food-grains and otner produce, while it has helped to enrich the farmer and the *zamīndār*, has severely strained the resources of clerks and other persons with fixed money incomes. Most of these people belong to what is known as the *bhadralok* class, and have to keep up a certain show of respectability. And so, during the recent high prices, the families of the clerks of Government offices had in some cases to go without their regular number of meals. The case of the *āmlās* and *nāibs* in the employ of private *zamīndārs* is perhaps not so hard, as in addition to their pay, which is usually very small, they receive numerous perquisites, which materially augment their otherwise slender incomes.

Labourers.

Though the wages of labourers have not perhaps risen in the same proportion as the price of food, yet as a whole the condition of these classes also has visibly improved within recent years. The spread of railways has effected a great improvement in their condition. "The command thus given of markets," says Mr. Skrine, "for their thews and sinews, has rendered them more prosperous and more independent." In most parts of the district, the labourers, whether owning land or not, live nearly as well as the poorer agriculturists. It is not unusual for a thrifty labourer to gradually save enough to buy land and thus rise to the class of agriculturists. Thus, the number of those, who on account of debt or other adverse circumstances drift from the landowning to the landless class, is to some extent counterbalanced by the rise of well-to-do wage-earners into the class of landowning agriculturists.

Indebtedness.

Bad seasons, sickness, litigation, division of the ancestral property amongst several heirs, marriages and other expensive ceremonials are all fruitful causes of debt. But in Bogrā the percentage of the agriculturists in debt and of those hopelessly implicated is perhaps lower than in most other parts of Bengal. The manager of the *khās mahāl* of Jaipur, who made special enquiries on the subject, reports that about 80 families out of 125 are in debt, and the manager of Naokhilā, the largest private *zamīndāri* in the district, reports that 70 per cent. of the agriculturists are in debt. But a distinction has to be drawn between indebtedness to a *mahājan* and indebtedness to the landlord, and a majority of the persons shown to be in debt probably consist of *rāiyats*, who are in arrears of rent in a bad year, and who clear their arrears as soon as a good season comes. It has also to be remembered that most of the *mahājans* of the district are cultivators, who have some corn to spare and invest it in loans to their fellow agriculturists.

Rate of interest and forms of loan.

The rate of interest varies according to the conditions of the loan and appears to have changed very little since the time of the last *Gazetteer*. The ordinary rate on petty loans, varying from Rs. 10 to Rs. 50, still continues to be two pice in the rupee per mensem, or 37½ per cent. per annum. In large transactions,

however, when the security is good the current rate of interest varies from Rs. 6 to Rs. 9 per cent. per annum.

A small Loan Association appears to have been started in Bogrā as early as 1872. The present loan office of Bogrā has a working capital of Rs. 21,000. The interest charged by the concern varies from Rs. 18 to Rs. 32 per cent. per annum. It paid a dividend of 8¾ per cent. in 1908.

The manager of the Jaipur estates describes some of the forms of loan in use:—

"*Haulāt* is a loan of a small amount without interest and also without execution of any document. *Sukhat* is a simple bond (without mortgage). A hand-note may be with or without interest. Loans may be raised by the mortgage of landed or movable properties. In the *khaikhālāsi* or usufructuary mortgage, an entire tenancy or a part of it is made over to the money-lender, who gets his money liquidated with interest from the produce of the land in a specified number of years. *Sudkhālāsi* or *paisudi*.—This is another kind of usufructuary mortgage, in which the produce of the land pledged liquidates only the interest but not the capital. *Dhortā* is a loan of money to a cultivator with the stipulation that it shall be repaid on a certain date with a specified quantity of paddy or jute as interest. *Dādan* or advance may also be described as a form of loan. Jute or paddy is valued in advance and money lent with the stipulation that the quantity paid for shall be delivered on a certain date. The price fixed is generally much lower than the anticipated market price."

Increase of landless classes.

In spite of the favourable conditions for agriculture, inquiry shows that the material condition of the smaller agriculturists is not so very different from that of their less favoured brethren in other parts of the country. The evil practice of a *rāiyat*, borrowing money on a mortgage of his holding, with the too frequent result that the money-lender ousts the *rāiyat*, and the latter turns into a cottier on his own property, is gradually on the increase. There are no separate figures in Registry offices to show the exact number of such transactions, but there has been a steady increase in the total number of mortgages of all classes, annually registered in the district. In 1899 we find there were only 7,369 mortgages registered, in 1902 the number rose to 9,849, in 1906 to 13,701, whereas in 1908 there were as many as 15,553. As the result of careful local inquiries made by him, the Rural Sub-Registrar of Akkelpur reports that for 7 villages in his jurisdiction, whereas in the year 1906, 57 usufructuary mortgages were registered with sub-leases in 14 cases, for the year 1907 for the same villages, no less than 72 usufructuary mortgages and 43 sub-leases were registered. The Sub-Inspector of Police, Dhunot, similarly reports that taking 6 villages in his *thānā* he found that whereas in 1906-07, 15 *rāiyats* had mortgaged their lands and taken leases for them from their creditors, no less than 26 *rāiyats* for the same villages had been reduced to the same

unfortunate position in the following year. Though the census figures do not help us to arrive at any definite conclusions with regard to the increase of the landless classes, yet it is instructive to note that during the decade ending in 1901, the number of agricultural labourers including dependents swelled to 44,759 from 29,915, showing an advance of nearly 50 per cent.

Dwellings.

Only the wealthier merchants and landowners live in brick houses, the rest of the population contenting themselves with mud and bamboo cottages. In the better class of cottages wooden beams and uprights are used; but bamboo, mud, and thatching (*ulu*, *khāri*, and *benā*) grass form the materials ordinarily used by the agricultural classes, though many of the wealthier agriculturists are now using corrugated iron sheets for the roofs of their houses instead of grass-thatching. The only ventilation is through the doors and the space left between the roof and the walls, there being usually no windows. The fronts and door-steps of mud-built houses are usually *leped*, that is, washed with a mixture of cow-dung and mud, in the case of poor families by the woman of the house. The brick-built houses are in most cases small, and made up of several very small rooms, with no verandah or a very small one. The entire furniture of a peasant consists of a wooden box for his clothes and a few brass pots. To this the shopkeeper adds a wooden bed or *taktaposh*, a large chest, and a couple of stools or *morās* made of wicker-work. The use of chairs and benches by the more well-to-do agriculturists has been referred to before.

Dress.

The national dress of the Hindu males, consisting of the *dhuti*, a cloth passes round the loins and between the legs from front to back, and the *chādar*, a white scarf worn loosely over the shoulders, is the ordinary one seen in Bogrā. The majority of men who can provide themselves with these articles wear them, but many of the poorer sort substitute a smaller cloth called a *gāmchā* in place of the *chādar*. A large part of the labouring and agricultural classes still wear, specially when out at work on their fields, a cloth called a *kopin*, barely large enough for the purposes of decency. The better classes have now adopted, particularly for formal occasions, the European style of coats and trousers, the coats however being buttoned up to the necks, without being turned down in front. The long robe, called *chāpkāns*, falling to the knees and buttoned from the right shoulder across the breast, which were adopted during the Musalmān times, are no longer in fashion and are now worn chiefly by the older class of people, who have adhered to the style of their younger days. The men also wear shoes of English shape. The dress of the Musalmāns is very like that of the Hindus, except that the more respectable wear a skull-cap of plain, figured, or embroidered cloth. The Wahābīs and Farāizis have a peculiar way of wearing their *dhutis*. They let them hang from the waist without passing the end between the legs. The origin of this habit is that most Musalmans

loosen out this part of the *dhuti*, when about to pray, in order that the whole may hang down, as it is considered irreverent to expose the leg above the knee when praying. The sects above mentioned extend this principle, and always let the *dhuti* fall well below the knee.

The ordinary dress of a woman is the *sāri*, a long piece of cloth or silk wrapped round the waist and then crossed over the breast and shoulders. The Musalmān women very often have two pieces of cloth very much in the fashion of the Assamese women. The Hindu women of the *bhadralok* classes, specially in the towns, also use jackets and very often wear under-garments in addition to their *sāris*.

CHAPTER VIII.

MANUFACTURES AND TRADE.

Decay of old industries.

"It would be difficult," remarked Mr. Skrine in 1892, "to point to any part of the world, of equal area and containing eight millions of inhabitants in which arts and manufactures are in so rudimentary a state as in the Rājshāhi Division. The bulk of necessaries and luxuries consumed, other than food, such as cloth, metalware, paper, glass, and salt, are imported, and paid for, not with other manufactures as in Europe but with agricultural produce." At the present date there is no manufacturing industry in Bogrā, and even cottage industries are carried on as a sole occupation by an extremely limited number of families. The last census shows that out of every thousand of the population of the district only 64 persons were engaged in industries, and four in commerce.

Indigo.

Indigo, which was formerly largely produced here, had entirely disappeared, even before the appearance of chemical indigo, being pushed out by the great advance in the value of other agricultural products. The parts of the district where it flourished were the eastern and southern police divisions. The largest concern was at Dhunot on the Mānash, which had eight out-factories.

Silk.

The following interesting account of this industry appears in the last *Gazetteer*:—

"The East India Company had silk filatures at Sherpur and Naudāpārā. The *Bagurār Shetihāsh* or vernacular History of Bogrā, gives 1808 as the date of the establishment of the latter. The same authority states that a sum of £50,000, or five lakhs of rupees, was yearly distributed in the shape of advances to the rearers of cocoons. It also relates that the peculations by the chief native manager or *diwān*, one Sib Sankar Dās, amounted to a quarter of that amount, though his salary was only £36 a year; and that the other servants of the factory embezzled as much more. This state of things continued till 1830, when the Resident discovered what was going on, and made the guilty parties disgorge £20,000 in one year. The factory establishment then consisted of a *diwān*, a *sarishtādār* or head clerk, a treasurer, two clerks, one accountant, one *hawāldār* or sergeant of the guard, sixteen *sipāhis* or soldiers, and about two thousand reelers, spinners, assorters, and heads of labour gangs. This factory was sold in 1834, when the connection of the Company with silk manufacture in the district came to an end. Since then the

silk interest has steadily declined. According to a report of the Collector, there was in 1871 only one manufactory in this district, namely, the silk filature of Naudāpārā, near Bogrā, belonging to Mr. C. G. Ridge. The annual outlay of the filature was about Rs. 45,00C or £3,000 and the business gave daily employment to about 212 men. This factory, like others in neighbouring districts, felt the competition with Chinese as well as French and Italian producers, and stopped working in 1875. About 1868 a fair quantity of silk used to be manufactured by native agency in this district, especially in the neighbourhood of Shāhzādpur and Gandagrām, but the manufacture has now almost completely died out. Mr. Ridge attributed its decay to the following causes :—(1) The falling off in the quantity of cocoons produced, owing to the continued failure of the *bands* or crops for the past two seasons; (2) a considerable increase in the value of cocoons, caused principally by purchases of the raw material for the European market." The spread of disease amongst the worms must have had a great deal to do then, as it has now, in bringing about a decline of the silk industry.

The decline of the silk trade has been a source of double hardship to the people who were previously engaged in it. For they have not been able to give up their mulberry land without relinquishing their entire holding, or to bring that land under any other crop, so they are paying every year rents at a very high rate (Rs. 4 per *bighā*) for fields, which do not bring anything into their pockets.

Sericulture, however, is showing some signs of revival under the support of the District Board. It is reported that within recent years the demand for silk cocoons of this district has increased and the rearers are getting good prices. A sure indication of the revival of the industry is to be found in the gradual increase in the area under mulberry cultivation. It is said that before 1901 there were only 13 acres under mulberry, whereas in 1906, 130 acres were under this crop and last year another 19 acres were taken up for the same purpose.

Mulberry is now grown only in the western portion of the district in a few villages surrounding the *sadr* station. It is found that it does better in the *khiār* than in the *pali* tracts, which are more suitable for castor plants, which feed *endi* worms.

There are at present 300 men employed in the district in mulberry cultivation and cocoon rearing; of these 41 are Hindus and the remaining 259 Muhammadans.

Of the several varieties of mulberry silk-worms the one principally reared in Bogrā belongs to the class *Chhota-Palu* (*B. fortunatus*).

Supposing that on an average 4 to 5 maunds of cocoons are raised by each rearer, it is estimated that about 1,000 maunds of green cocoons are now produced in the district in a year. Of these only a very small portion is reeled here. Most of the produce is

sent to the districts of Rājshāhi, Murshidābād and Mālda, and a little also goes to Birbhum. Sometimes the cocoon rearers themselves, but oftener brokers, take these cocoons to Tāhirpur in the Rājshāhi district, and to the head-quarters of Murshidābād, Mālda and Birbhum, where they find a ready market. It also sometimes happens that traders or *byapāris* come from the said places, purchase and take away cocoons from the rearer's home. About 90 per cent. of the produce is exported to the said places, the remaining 10 per cent. being used for local consumption. But it should also be noted that a major portion of the silk thread reeled in this district, small as it is, is also sent to Rājshāhi and Murshidābād.

Paper used to be manufactured in the villages of Shāhzādpur and Mājirā in Bogrā police division. An interesting description of the process of manufacture from jute mixed with a certain quantity of lime is given in the last *Gazetteer*. Paper.

This industry, however, is now dead and paper is no longer manufactured locally in this district.

The police divisions of this district, which formerly formed part of the district of Dinājpur, were, during the greater part of the first half of this present century, the most important sugarcane producing tracts in this part of Bengal. In 1810 Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton, in his "Account of Dinājpur," speaking of Bādalgāchi, says, "The sugar made in this part of the country is called *bādal*, and is reckoned the best in the district." Sugar manufacture.

So early as 1863, Major Sherwell, the Revenue Surveyor, reported that the industry was in a very declining condition, and although sugar continued to be manufactured at Jamālpur till a much later date by a Muhammadan firm, yet with the failure of this firm some years ago this once flourishing industry may be said to be completely extinct in the district.

But though sugar is no longer manufactured in the district, jaggery or *gur* is still prepared in fairly large quantities, in *thānās* Pānchbībī and Sibganj. The *rāiyats* here mostly use iron mills of which a considerable number is supplied by Messrs. Renwick & Co. on hire. The mill is always let out along with the boiling pan (a shallow circular iron pan). The rate of hire varies from 8 annas to one rupee per diem. Manufacture of jaggery.

The boiling plant consists of a large circular iron vessel about 6 feet in diameter on the top and 3½ feet at the base, and 18 inches deep. It is used in conjunction with a smaller iron vessel, called a *khorā*, which is divided into three equal compartments. In place of the iron *khorā*, three earthen pans are very often used. The juice is at first put in the main boiling pan and heated for about half an hour. It is then removed to the three compartments of the iron *khorā* in equal proportions, leaving about 10 to 12 seers in the main pan. When the juice in this pan is sufficiently concentrated, the contents of the nearest compartment No. 1 of the iron *khorā* are transferred back to the main pan in small quantities at a

time, the juice from the second compartment being transferred to compartment No. 1, and that of No. 3 to No. 2 at the same time. This process goes on until all the juice from the iron *khorā* has found its way back to the main pan. The scum which rises in the beginning of the boiling operation is everywhere removed, and it is either thrown away or given to cattle. The scum which rises in the later stages of boiling is skimmed off in most places, and is used generally for mixing with tobacco. Generally, the *rāiyats* do not use any substance for clearing the juice. When *gur* of specially good quality is to be made, the juice is cleared by the addition of a little milk at the time of boiling. The usual form of jaggery made is the semi-liquid. known as *dānā* (or crystal mixed) *gur*. Solid *gur* (callled *dhimā gur*) is prepared in Mokāmtolā and Jaipur. The jaggery is moulded into blocks or cakes of various shapes and sizes by being poured into pits dug in the ground and lined with sacking cloth or leaves, or into pots or bamboo baskets of various shapes, and is taken out after it has cooled down into a solid mass. The method for ascertaining the correct point in boiling is as follows:—A little jaggery is taken up with a stick; if it falls in drops, the *gur* is still too thin; on the contrary if it falls in a continuous line and the line after descending some way is drawn back towards the stick, the boiling is complete. Experts can tell the correct point by feeling a drop of *gur* between the fingers.

Semi-liquid and liquid jaggery (*dānā gur*) are kept in earthen pots of various shapes and sizes.

The amount of raw sugar (*gur*) produced in the district from sugar-cane in the year 1907 was estimated at 910,000 cwt.

Weaving industry. Silk and cotton.

Of existing industries, weaving is the most important. There are three classes of weavers in the district, *viz.*, (1) Tānti, (2) Jugi and (3) Jolāhā, the first two belonging to the Hindu and the third to the Muhammadan caste. The numbers of persons enumerated under each of these classes were Tānti, 2,209; Jugi, 3,318; Jolāhā, 12,559. But most of these people have long since abandoned their traditional occupation and taken to agriculture. Thus the number of actual workers of the hand-weaving industry in the district is, at present, very small, and was found to be only 1,456 (male 875 and female 581) at the last census.

The Tāntis were formerly weavers of silk and fine cloth. They were at one time men of wealth and influence, in the district, and had an absolute monopoly in the cloth market. But competition with the products of foreign power looms gradually reduced them to poverty and finally compelled them to leave their occupation. It is doubtful if there are over 50 families altogether of this class in the whole district, of which a few only (not more than half a dozen families) living in the Bogrā town are known as manufacturers of good silk cloth.

The kinds of silk fabrics manufactured by the Tāntis in this district are very limited. They weave mostly *dhuties*, *chādars*

handkerchiefs, *thāns* or pieces for making coats, *chāpkāns*, etc., and silk *ālwāns*, and only one or two of the Tāntis know how to prepare ornamented borders. They do not dye the fabrics or know how to make fast dyes. Some *dhuties* are made with coloured borders, but the thread for these borders is generally brought from Calcutta. The prices at which these cloths are sold are as follows :—(1) *dhuti* ($9\frac{1}{2}$ cubits long by $2\frac{1}{2}$ cubits wide)—Rs. 9 to Rs. 12 per *dhuti;* (2) *chādar* (6 cubits long by 3 cubits wide)—Rs. 6 to Rs. 9 per sheet; (3) handkerchief (24 inches square)—10 annas to Re. 1 per piece; (4) *thān* (6 yards long by 1 yard wide)—Rs. 14 to Rs. 18; (5) silk *ālwān* or *terchi chādar* (6 cubits by 3 cubits)—Rs. 24 to Rs. 28 per piece. These *ālwāns* are so woven that the crossings of the warp and the weft show diagonal lines, and are believed to be more durable than the unribbed *chādars*.

Most of these articles are locally consumed. No regular exports are known, and the produce of this district is not sufficient to supply local demands. Traders in the *bāzār* import silk fabrics from Calcutta or Murshidābād, partly because the local supply is insufficient, and partly because the weavers cannot weave cloths of varied qualities and prices. Their fabrics are of the medium quality, and so they cannot supply the demands of those who require cheap things or very fine things.

The Jugis and the Jolāhās are much lower in rank than the Tāntis, and weave coarse cotton cloths, which they usually sell locally to the poorer agriculturists The number of Jolāhās at present engaged in weaving is much larger than that of other castes of weavers in the district. Jugi weavers are very rare.

Other industries. Besides the hand-weaving industry referred to above, the only other form of industry which is practised in this district is the manufacture of bell-metal utensils. The chief centres of the industry are Bogrā and Sherpur.

Mat-weaving from thin strips of bamboo is a very common industry in this district. In the *pali* tract where no mud walls can be erected, the walls are almost exclusively made up of this bamboo matting. A temporary roofing is also sometimes made out of this. Baskets of various shapes and sizes are made of bamboo to meet the requirement of a rural life. Gold and silver ornaments are fashioned by a few artisans who have come from Dacca. Working in leather is very insignificant, hides being largely exported without being tanned.

Skilled artisans are few in number and their level of skill is not very high. At the exhibition held in the district in 1907, there were some fine specimens of cutlery from Jaipur, and one Satis Chandra Kunda of Chāmpāpur exhibited some clever imitations of skulls of buffaloes and human beings in *papier maché*.

The industrial school, which has just been started with the object of imparting industrial education to the people and thus indirectly helping the revival of indigenous industries, has been noted in Chapter XIII.

Trade and commerce.

The exports considerably exceed the imports in value. The imports for the year 1906-07 amounted to 699,703 maunds, while the exports were 1,364,197 maunds in weight. Common salt, kerosine oil, tobacco, sugar, brass ware, spices, shoes and cotton goods are the chief articles of import. Tobacco comes from Rangpur, brass ware from Rājshāhi, a considerable proportion of the sugar comes from Gāzipur, and the other articles come from Calcutta. Paddy (rice) and jute are the two main articles of export. A portion of these find their way to Pābnā by boats, whence they are distributed elsewhere. A portion is exported by steamers plying in the Brahmaputra, and the major portion is exported by rail to Calcutta. Hides are exported to Dacca. The chief centres of export for rice are Hilli, Burīganj, Dhupchānchiā, Sultānganj, Chāmpāpur, Sonāmukhi and Adamdīghi; and those for jute are Shariākāndi, Naokhilā, Kutubpur, Gossāinbāri, Dhunot, Dhupchānchiā, Hilli, Sukhānpukur, Sonātolā and Chāndaikonā. The two lines of Railway, the Northern Bengal and the Brahmaputra-Sāntāhār, now afford great facilities for export and import. Boat traffic is very brisk during the rainy season in the eastern tract.

Markets.

Since 1876, the date of the last *Gazetteer*, there have been marked changes in the commercial centres of the district. These are mostly due to the extension of railways, opening of new roads, and to other causes affecting means of communications. Several new and flourishing markets have sprung up near railway stations, and by the sides of feeder and other important roads; while, on the other hand, some old markets are in a languishing and depressed condition. Internal trade is largely carried on at these markets, where the villagers come with the produce of their fields and peddlers with their bundles of miscellaneous articles, and where the *mahājans*, chiefly *kāiyāns*, have their temporary shops. All sorts of eatables and agricultural produce and every article of foreign or local manufacture which the people need for their humble wants are available there. Except a few daily *bāzārs*, all these markets are locally called *hāts* and are usually held twice in a week. Some of the markets are managed direct by the proprietors of the land on which they are held, others are leased out at fixed annual rents. All important markets have also several permanent shops in their compounds, the shopkeepers paying rent for the land occupied by them. The proprietors or lessees of the land or the persons who have taken the market in farm (*Ijārādārs*) collect rent on each market day from the stall-keepers at rates varying from half an anna to two annas a stall, as well as tolls in cash or in kind from the sellers of the vegetables, fish, and other edibles, at rates which vary from half a pice to one anna per head. In some of the markets where cattle are brought for sale, the proprietors or lessees collect a fixed fee per head of cattle sold, the rate adopted in the majority of cases being half an anna per rupee on the price of bullocks and cows, and three pies on that of goats. Besides these,

another fee called *kayeldāri* or weighing fee is levied in some markets on sellers of jute, paddy, pulses, etc. Again in some of the markets on river banks, mooring dues are levied during the rainy season.

Markets in the Bogrā town.

In Bogrā town there are three important markets, the "Fateh Ali" and "Kāthāli" *bāzārs* and the "Kālitolā" hāt. The first two are situated in the centre of the town, but the *hāt* is held about a mile from the station in the northern extremity of the town. All these markets are managed direct by their proprietors, and the annual income from the Kālitolā hāt is approximately Rs. 2,000. Rice and jute are the principal articles of trade in these markets, but there are a large number of permanent shops in the *bāzārs*.

Most of the shopkeepers deal in imported articles, *viz.*, cotton piece-goods, shoes, salt, tobacco, corrugated iron, kerosine, brass and bell-metal, pots and pans, spices, cocoa-nut and castor oil, etc.

Markets in the interior of the district.

In the rural area of Bogrā *thānā* the principal markets are Dublāgari, Sultānganj, Gokul, Gohāil, Nungolā, Malchā, Gābtoli, Naruāmālā and Mohishāban. Within the jurisdiction of Sibganj police station, Burīganj, Bihār, Kichak, Jamāir and Mokāmtolā are the principal markets. Dhupchānchiā, Dhāp and Durgāpur are the important markets within the police division of Dhupchānchiā. In Adamdīghi *thānā* Sonāmukhi is the most important market and is one of the principal commercial centres of the district, some wealthy merchants having permanent shops here. There are three other markets in this *thānā*, *viz.*, Akkelpur, Adamdīghi and Chāmpāpur. In Pānchbībī *thānā* the principal markets are Hilli, Bāliāghātā, Jaipur and Rukindipur (known as Jamālganj Hāt). All these marts are situated on the northern section of the Eastern Bengal State Railway close to Hilli, Pānchbībī, Jaipur and Jamālganj Stations respectively. Jute, rice and paddy are exported in large quantities by rail from these markets, and cattle are also occasionally brought for sale. Hilli on the Jamunā is an old and important centre of trade, being the seat of several wealthy merchants with a great number of permanent shops. The market is managed direct by its proprietor. The total collection is estimated at about Rs. 2,000 a year, besides some mooring dues. The market next in importance is the one at Jaipur, which attained its present flourishing condition only after the opening of the Northern Bengal State Railway. This market is let out in farm at an annual rental of Rs. 2,000. The two principal markets in the Sherpur police division, Baradwāri and Mirzāpur, are leased out by their proprietors at Rs. 724 and Rs. 375 respectively. There is a considerable number of markets in Shariākāndi *thānā*, out of which the following ten appear to be important:—

(1) Harikhāli and (2) Shariākāndi on the bank of the Bāngāli, (3) Naokhilā and (4) Kutubpur on the Mānash, (5) Karamjā and (6) Phulbāri on the Valkā, (7) Mathurāpārā on the Belāi river,

(8) Sonātolā and (9) Chamupārā close to the railway stations Sanātolā and Sukhānpukur respectively on the B. S. B. Railway, and (10) Baulār Hāt on the road from Sonātolā to Mokāmtolā. The two principal markets in Dhunot *thānā*, namely. Gossāinbāri and Elangi, are leased out by their proprietors at Rs. 846 and Rs. 500 respectively.

The Khas Mahal markets.

The markets at Bālighātā, Rukindipur, Durgādaha, Rāghabpur, Khanjanpur, and Koriā, belong to the Jaipur Government estates. The most important is perhaps the Bālighātā market near the Pānchbībī railway station. It was started in 1879, and the receipts now come to Rs. 2,000 a year. It is held twice weekly. Next in importance is the Rukindipur market close to Jamālganj railway station. It was started in 1889, and now has an average annual income of Rs. 1,000. The Khanjanpur and Koriā markets have been only recently organised, but already promise to be important centres of commerce. As in most adjacent markets jute and paddy form the principal articles of commerce in these *hāts*. They are now all under direct Government management, though before 1904-05 those at Rukindipur, Durgādaha and Bālighātā used to be let in farm. The establishment for managing these markets, with an Inspector at its head, costs something like Rs. 1,713 per annum or more than half the gross receipts, but these Government markets are bound to expand a good deal in the future, because they are the best managed in the district and the sellers enjoy perfect immunity from all irregular exactions and petty harassment.

Old markets for which *sair* compensation is paid.

There are three markets in the district for which *sair* compensation has been allowed to the *zamīndārs*, namely, (1) Sabdaldighi in *thānā* Sibganj, (2) Pardesh, and (3) Kundgāon in Adamdīghi. Compensation for Kundgaon *hāt* was formerly paid from the Rājshāhi Collectorate; the *zamīndārs*, Nawāb Saiad Abdus Sobhān Chaudhuri and others, have since got the payment order transferred to the Bogrā Collectorate. The amounts of compensation paid annually are as follows:—

	Rs.	a.	p.
For *hāt* Sabdaldighi	228	4	0
Do. Pardesh	185	5	0
Do. Kundgāon	55	10	0
Total ...	469	3	0

Of these Sabdaldighi was formerly a big market, but has gradually declined since the opening of another market at Bihār, a village not very far away. As was remarked in the last *Gazetteer*, the fact that at the time of the Permanent Settlement there were only three markets, in which compensation was given for the abolition of transit duties, is striking evidence of the depressed state of trade in those days, particularly when it is remembered that this abolition was a very comprehensive measure.

Fairs.

Besides the above regular *hāts*, a number of fairs are held in different parts of the district at different seasons of the year and are invariably connected with some religious festival or ceremony. Large congregations gather even from fairly distant villages, and a great deal of business is done by the keepers of the temporary booths and shops, who come from different parts of the district, and some from distant towns like Nātor, Pābnā, Sirājganj and Naogāon. Edibles, sweets, metal utensils, shoes, cloths of various kinds are the chief articles of sale at these fairs.

The principal fairs in the district are (1):—Sherpur, in *thānā* Sherpur, which takes place on the occasion of the *Sripanchami pūjā* about January or February, and lasts for 15 days. A large number of people attend it and sellers come from different places. (2) Punatta, in police station Khetlāl. It is held in January and lasts for 15 days. About 600 people assemble, and cattle are brought for sale. (3) Sukhānpukur, formerly known as Bogā, in police station Bogrā, in February. It lasts for one month. About 500 people attend it. (4) Mahāsthān, in police station Sibganj, in March, lasts for eight days. About 1,000 people assemble and sellers come from different places. Cattle are also sold here. (5) Gopināthpur, in police station Admadīghi. It is held in the months of February and March and lasts for ten days. It is attended by about 10,000 people. Sellers come from surrounding districts and there is a very large sale of cattle and also of small iron ware and cloth. (6) Kelnā Kusi, in police station Sherpur, in May, lasts 3 days. It is attended by nearly 2,000 people. (7) Rukindipur, in *thānā* Adamdīghi, in the Jaipur Government estates. It is held on the occasion of the Kāli *pūjā* in November and lasts for 15 days. About 200 people attend it daily.

Weights and measures.

Two standards of weight are in use in Bogrā district. One, the seer of 60 *tolās* weight, is that ordinarily employed in native transactions, and is nearly equivalent to 1 lb. 9 oz. avoirdupois. The other is the Calcutta or Government standard seer of 80 *tolās* weight, commonly called the *pakkā* seer, which is much less frequently employed than the former. The recognised divisions and multiples of the seer are the same for both standards. They are as follows:—4 *chittāks*=1 *poā*; 4 *poās*=1 seer; 5 seers=1 *pāsuri*; 8 *pāsuris*=1 *man* or maund. The liquid measure is the same as the above, which may be considered the dry or grain measure. It is not exactly accurate to speak of grain measure as being one of weight. It is, particularly, in the case of retail transactions, quite as much one of capacity. The retail grain-dealer, either in his shop in the *bāzār* or in his stall in the market, never weighs out his rice or wheat. He measures it by means of a *kāthā* or cane basket, which is supposed to contain a certain quantity (4 seers), but which is rarely correct. The measure employed for transactions in oil and milk is a bamboo cylinder called a *chungā*.

CHAPTER IX.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.

Roads and development of communication.

The oldest road in the district and one of the oldest, so far as our present knowledge goes, in this part of Bengal is the one running north and south through the whole length of the district, on the west side of the Karatoyā. It now runs up to Rangpur, and towards the south bends south-east to Sirājganj. In the old Dutch map of Van den Broucke it is part of the great military road of the Musalmāns from Rāmpur Boāliā, and passed through the present district of Pābnā near Hariāl, then through Sherpur, called "Ceerpoor Mirts," and then through "Tessiadin," which has lately been identified as Chāndniā, near Sibganj, at one time a great commercial centre. In Major Rennell's Bengal Atlas, dated 1781, another old military road is to be found, which however, has now disappeared. It came from the old capital of Gaur, and in this district passed through Jamālganj, Khetlāl and Sibganj. In the later days of the Muhammadan empire, Sibganj seems to have taken the place as an important military centre which was before held by Ghorāghāt. It was not itself fortified, but was even as late as Rennell's time connected directly with the forts of Fathipurgarh and Durgāhātāgarh. Rennell's Atlas gives several other roads diverging from it, most of which have been since lost; one to Dinājpur, a second to Ghorāghāt, and another to Govindaganj and Chilmāri. After the English occupation, and before Bogrā became a district head-quarters, all these roads were allowed to fall into decay. Little was done till about 1835, when the Dinājpur road was commenced. As late as 1871, there were besides the station roads, only six other roads in the district, *viz.*, the Rangpur road, the Dinājpur road, the Rājshāhi road, the Dhupchānchiā road, the Sirājganj road, and the Sibganj-Mahāsthān road. The total length of these roads was 133 miles only. But during the scarcity of 1874, relief was given by employing the indigent on roads, and 137 miles of roads with an average width of sixteen feet were then made. Most of these lie in the west and south-west of the district, and were designed to connect the most important parts of the district with the Northern Bengal State Railway. Since that time some more roads with the object of feeding the railway stations on the Northern Bengal State Railway and the new Bogrā-Brahmaputra-Sāntāhār (Sultānpur) Branch Railway have been constructed, and in most cases the District Board has received substantial help from Government in constructing these railway feeder roads.

District roads.

There are altogether 483 miles of road under the control and administration of the District Board, of which one mile is metalled and the rest 482 miles) are unmetalled. The Board roads are broadly divided into two classes, *viz.*, district roads, (40) and village roads (35). The district roads have a length of 378 miles, whereas the village roads cover 105 miles. Besides the District Board roads, the municipalities of Bogrā and Sherpur maintain 27 miles of road, and a few chains at Hilli are now maintained by the Public Works Department. The condition of the roads of the district compares favourably with the similar unmetalled roads of the neighbouring districts of Rājshāhi, Pābnā and Dinājpur.

Of the 40 district roads under the District Board, the following only need special mention:—

1. The Bogrā-Rangpur road joins the district with Rangpur *viá* Govindaganj in Gāibāndhā. It enters the district 4 miles north of Mokāmtolā, and runs southward to the headquarters of the district. It is 16 miles in length and bridged and drained throughout. It crosses the Karatoyā at the 8th mile from Bogrā, which is not bridged but has a ferry. Average annual cost of repair is Rs. 65 per mile.

2. The Bogrā-Dinājpur road: 44 miles long. Partially bridged and drained. There are three rivers to cross, but they have ferries during the rains, *viz.*, the Nāgar at the 12th mile, the Harāmati at the 26th, and the Tulshīgangā at the 27th mile. The road runs in a northerly direction through the police stations of Bogrā, Sibganj, Khetlāl and Pānchbībī where it enters the Dinājpur district. It is maintained at an average annual cost of Rs. 66 per mile.

3. The Bogrā-Sultānpur road: 26 miles long. Partially bridged and drained. It connects Bogrā civil station with the railway station at Sultānpur (Sāntāhār). This was the only important road to Calcutta before the opening of the branch railway line. It runs through the police stations, *Bogra*, Dupchānchiā and Adamdīghi. The Nāgar on the 13th mile has a ferry during rains. Average annual cost of repair is Rs. 78 per mile.

4. The Bogrā-Sirājganj road: 24 miles long. Partially bridged and drained. It runs southward through Sherpur. The dead channel of the Karatoyā on the 22nd mile has a ferry during rains. Average annual cost of repair is Rs. 66-4-0 per mile.

5. The Bogrā-Shariākāndi road: 13 miles long. It is raised and partially bridged, and there are ferries across the Karatoyā on the first mile, the Ichhāmati on the 8th, the Sukdaha on the 11th and the Bāngāli river on the 13th mile. The country further eastward is low and difficult. Annual average cost of repair is Rs. 80-7-0 per mile.

6. The Bogrā-Naokhilā road: 16 miles long; joins Bogrā with Naokhilā, the *Kachāri* of the Rājā of Dighāpatiyā, and an important centre of trade close to the Brahmaputra. This road is intended

to facilitate communications with the rich jute country in the east. Annual average cost of repair is Rs. 33-4-0 per mile.

7. The Sultānganj-Adamdighi road: 20 miles long. It is raised, bridged and widened throughout. It connects the Sultānganj market on the Sherpur road on the bank of the Karatoyā with the Elāhiganj Hāt, which was once a very large market on the Nāgar, and passes on its way through the *hāts* at Shabrul, Mālanchā and Durgāpur. It is maintained at an annual average cost of Rs. 55-8-0 per mile.

8. The Dupchānchiā-Nawābganj road: 13 miles long, running through an important rice-producing tract, connects the large market at Sonāmukhi and joins at Akkelpur railway station. Average annual cost of repair is Rs. 70 per mile.

9. The Jaipur-Jaipur Hāt road, two and a half miles in length. It runs from the railway station at Jaipur Hāt to Khanjanpur, the head-quarters station of the manager of the Khanjanpur Government estate. The metalling of this road is in progress Average annual cost of repair is Rs. 88-8-0 per mile.

10. The Sherpur-Dhunot road, eight and three-fourth miles in length, branches off from the Sirājganj road at Sherpur towards east and connects the police station at Dhunot. Average annual cost of repair is Rs. 37-7-0 per mile.

11. The railway feeder road from Pānchbībī railway station to Lokmā Hāt, 4¾ miles in length. It was constructed to connect the Lokmā Hāt with the railway station at Pānchbībī. Lokmā Hāt is an important centre, where a good deal of trade in jute, rice and sugar-cane is carried on. The cost of construction of this road was Rs. 11,459.

12. The railway feeder road from Jamālganj railway station to Itākholā. It is raised and bridged throughout, excepting where it crosses rivers. It runs from Itākholā Hāt which is a junction of four roads running to Dinājpur, to Bogrā, to Nawābganj, and to Kamdiā, respectively. This road also taps important centres of trade in the district. The cost of constructing this road was Rs. 21,042.

13. The feeder road from Chāmpāpur to Talorā railway station, 7 miles in length. It is raised and bridged throughout. It passes through or near the important villages of Rasikganj Hāt, Kundagrām Hāt and Porāghātā Hāt, from which a good deal of traffic finds its way to the railway station at Talorā. The cost of construction of this road was Rs. 15,169.

Arboriculture.

There are continuous avenues of trees along 129 miles of road: 17,500 young trees have also been recently planted along the principal roads, and steps are being taken to maintain and extend them according to a definite plan.

Inspection bungalows.

There are at present 14 inspection bungalows and one staging bungalow. A standard plan providing a *pakkā* building with two rooms has been adopted, and a scheme prepared for the whole district. The inspection bungalows are at Sherpur, Fulbāri,

Dhunot, Mokāmtolā, Burīganj, Khetlāl, Pānchbibi, Durgāpur, Dhupchānchiā, Akkelpur, Jaipur, Khanjanpur, Jamālganj, Sultānpur (Sāntāhār), and a staging Dāk bungalow is at the head-quarters. Of these the bungalows at Sherpur, Burīganj and Khanjanpur are of the standard type. The bungalows at Fulbāri and Dhupchānchiā are also comfortable buildings, but the others are not suitable and will sooner or later have to be replaced by buildings of the standard type. The Dāk bungalow at head-quarters is a comfortable building.

Country carts.

Since the opening of the Brahmaputra-Sāntāhār (Sultānpur) Branch Railway line, the country carts, which were most extensively used for passenger traffic from Bogrā to Sāntāhār (Sultānpur) railway station, are seldom used for that purpose now. They are mostly used now for carrying goods to the several railway stations, and only occasionally for passenger traffic.

Water communications.

In former times the rivers in the district were very largely used for traffic. The Karatoyā was of great value as a trade-route, when it formed the lower course of the river Tīsta, but the floods of 1787 covered its basin with sand, and since then, year after year, the sand has been brought down the Karatoyā, till at the present time it has completely closed the channel in the police division of Sibganj, and rendered the rest of the river below very shallow. About 1820 A.D. there was another heavy flood which broke through the east bank of the Karatoyā nearly opposite Govindaganj police station and made its way up to the Bāngāli by a new channel known as the Kātākhāli.

Nowadays at least half the water of the Karatoyā goes down the Kātākhāli and the river below has become quite shallow and full of weeds. The present bed of the lower Karatoyā is 15 feet higher than the bed of the upper Karatoyā at the junction of the Kātākhāli. It is navigable during the rains, but in the dry season only very small boats can pass through it.

Steamers ply between Goālundo and Phulchari ghāt touching at two stations close to the Shariākāndi police station.

During the rainy season, any place in the eastern tract can be reached by boat from any other place, but the passenger traffic by boats is very insignificant in the western tract. Such is also the case in the eastern tract from November to June.

Boat routes.

All the water traffic of Bogrā either passes along the Brahmaputra, or converges towards that river. Jute is transported to Sirājganj, Goālundo and sometimes to Calcutta, by the Brahmaputra and the Bāngāli, on which the greater number of the jute marts lie. Oilseeds are carried by the Bāngāli and Karatoyā down the Phuljhor and Urāsāgar to Goālundo. Some jute and tobacco from Rangpur also find their way from these rivers and their upper tributaries. Rice is exported by boat from the markets on the lower reaches of the Karatoyā and on the upper Phuljhor. Previously rice used to be exported in large quantities

from the markets on the Nāgar and Jamunā, whence it was carried direct by the Atrāi into the Ganges at Kumārkhāli, or by the Madhumati, between Backergunge and Jessore, and the Sundarban channels to Calcutta.

Description of boats.

The boats that navigate the rivers of Bogrā are of the same kind as those met with in most of the eastern and southern districts of Bengal. The boat in most common use is the *dinghi*, principally for passenger traffic. It can, however, carry from five to fifteen hundredweight. The *pānsi* is exactly like a *dinghi*, except that it is covered over behind from the stern to the mast with a rounded roof of mats. Both kinds of boats are propelled by oars or poled along, sails being rarely used. The *bhedi* is a boat varying from eighteen to thirty feet in length, from five to eight feet in width, and from three to four feet from the level of the gunwale to the keel. It can carry from one to six tons, and is worked by from three to six oarsmen. The *jāngā* is very like the *bhedi*, but draws more water, and with an equal length has a heavier tonnage. It sometimes carries as much as ten tons, in which case a full crew would not be less than eight or ten men. The *malungi* is a large boat of from ten to twenty tons burthen, widely and roundly built. It is most in use on the large rivers, and is provided with a mast and sails. It is also frequently towed by a *gun* or long rope, attached to the top of the mast, and hauled by three or four men on shore. It has a large rudder, by means of which its head is kept away from the bank while towing. The *ulakh* is in nearly every respect similar to the *malungi*, except that it has a sharp bow and a higher stern. The three last-mentioned boats are largely used in the rice and salt trades. They are usually provided with mat roofs upheld by bamboos, on which the crew can walk. Besides the smaller kinds of *dinghi*, a rude kind of boat called *sarungā* is used on small rivers and marshes. It is hollowed out from the trunk of a large tree into the shape of a flat square-ended punt, and is propelled by a pole or bamboo. It is made from no particular tree, as the *dongā* of western districts is made from the *tāl* tree. The *sarungā* is sometimes constructed of undressed planks roughly put together.

Ferries.

There are 23 principal ferries in the district, of which 6 are managed by the District Board and the rest by Government. They are leased out annually to the highest bidders.

The rates chargeable by the ferry-men are hung up in a conspicuous place at the ghāts. The ferries are divided into two classes. The rates chargeable are an anna for a man, and annas 6 for loaded carbs and in first class ferries; and just half of the above charges in second class ferries, during the rains. In the dry season second class ferries are seldom used.

The farmers are required to keep a sufficient number of boats and to maintain them in a proper condition. There is also a scale of the number of boatmen to be kept at each ferry.

Railways.

The Northern Bengal State Railway runs for 39 miles through the western part of the district. The Brahmaputra-Sāntāhār (Sultānpur) Branch Railway from Sāntāhār *viâ* Bogrā to Phulchari, which was completed in the year 1900-01, runs for 42 miles through the district from west to east. It was constructed out of the funds of a private company, but was subsequently acquired by Government as State Railway. The influence of the railways in developing the resources of the district and stimulating the growth of its population has already been dwelt upon in Chapter III. The great facility to trade and commerce, which the advent of the railway lines has afforded, has also been described before. The remarkable way, in which flourishing centres of commerce have sprung up at most of the convenient railway stations, is a most gratifying feature of the progress made by the district in recent years.

Post and Telegraph offices.

The district contains 31 post offices and two telegraph offices, one at Bogrā and the other at Sherpur. Besides, there is also telegraphic communication in all railway stations in the district. The head post office at Bogrā was till recently a third class one, it has now been raised to the second class of post offices.

CHAPTER X.

Land Revenue Administration.

Early Revenue History. Musalmān period.

The revenue history, during Musalmān rule, of the country now included in the Bogrā district, forms a part of the Musalmān history of Bengal, and needs no detailed recapitulation here. As is well known, the Pathān emperor, Sher Shāh (A.D. 1540—1545) was the first Muhammadan ruler, who tried to introduce a regular system for the assessment and collection of the land revenue, and fixed the share of the State at one-fourth of the produce of the soil. The famous revenue system of Rājā Todar Mal, the minister of the illustrious Akbar, was based on the model of that of the Pathān emperor. The most noteworthy points in the system of Todar Mal consisted, firstly, in his attempt to ascertain the amount of the produce of each *bighā* of land, and the proportion of that amount which each ought to pay to the Government; and secondly, in the determination of an equivalent in money for the proportion so fixed. In commuting grain to money, returns of the prices-current for the preceding 19 years were called for from towns and villages, and the average of the rates was accepted. The settlements were first made for one year, but later on a ten years' settlement was introduced.

The first Imperial divisions of Bengal (excluding Orissa) were into *sarkārs* (corresponding in some respects to English counties) which were subdivided into *parganās*. About 1582 Todar Mal divided the province into 19 *sarkārs* and 682 *parganās*, and the Imperial revenue was fixed at one crore and seven lakhs of rupees. At the close of Shāh Jahān's reign, in 1658, the number of *sarkārs* had risen to 34 and that of *parganās* to 1,350, yielding a revenue of one crore and thirty-one lakhs of rupees. During the administration of Jāfar Khān, and the reign of Muhammad Shāh, in 1722, it was found too expensive to have so many Muhammadan revenue superintendents, and the country was divided into 13 *chāklās* or units of executive administration, while the number of the *parganās* was enhanced to 1,660, with an established rental in future, of one crore and forty-three lakhs of rupees. This was the ultimate and most important reform in the financial distribution of territory in Bengal. The settlement records of Jāfar Khān are known as *Jamākāmel Tumāri*, and formed the groundwork of all later settlements. The 13 *chāklās* referred to above were divided to 25 *zamīndāris* at the time of Nawāb Sujā-ud-din, and the division was known as the *Etimāmbandi*.

It appears that most of the area of the present district was comprised within the old *sarkārs* of Bāzuhai and Pinjārāh, and the northern part of the district formed a portion of the *chāklā* of Ghorāghāt, but it is impossible to connect with any certainty the *parganās* and estates comprised within the present jurisdiction of the Bogrā district with the names of the *parganās*, which occur in the *Etimāmbandi* of the Musalmān kings, because the old *parganās* have now been broken up, and distributed over more than one district.

For the same reason, although the names of some *parganās* in the District Revenue Roll are identical with those in the *goshwārā* of the Musalmān kings, it is impossible to come to any definite conclusions regarding the fluctuations in the amount of land revenue due to the State from these *parganās* at different periods. The following notes about some of the *parganās*, the names of which have come down from Musalmān times, will however, be of interest *:—

(1) *Parganā* Apail or Anbel or Ampol was in *sarkār* Pinjārāh. Its revenue was 1,058,725 *dāms* (Rs.26,464) at the time of Rājā Todar Mal. In 1135 B.S. (1728 A.D.) the revenue was Rs. 53,961. In the time of Warren Hastings, Muhammad Raza Khān in 1172 B.S. (1765 A.D.) assessed Apail at Rs. 69,300. In the last *Gazetteer* (1876) its area was shown to be 24,133 acres or 37·70 square miles and the land revenue £3,912-18s. (Rs. 39,129). Its present area is 67,598 acres and the land revenue Rs. 47,861.

(2) Mihmānshāhi was known as Sherpur Murchā. It belonged to *sarkār* Bāzuhai. Todar Mal assessed it at 2,207,715 *dāms* or Rs. 55,192; when the *parganā* was dismembered from Chak Ghorāghāt the land revenue was Rs. 3,420 in B.S. 1141 (A.D. 1734). The last *Gazetteer* shows its area to be 106,417 acres or 163·15 square miles and the land revenue £5,845-18s. (Rs. 58,459). Its present (1907) area is 107,600 acres and the land revenue Rs. 60,143.

(3) In Akbar's time the *jamā* of Pratāpbāzu was 1,881,265 *dāms* or Rs. 47,031; in 1135 B.S. (1728 A.D.) it was Rs. 41,274. When it was dismembered from Chak Ghorāghāt the *jamā* was Rs. 2,892. In 1876 its area was 143,247 acres or 223·54 square miles with a land revenue of £5,366-6s. (Rs. 53,663). Its present area is 144,724 acres and the land revenue Rs. 58,437.

(4) *Parganā* Silbarsā was within the Bāzuhai *sarkār*. Its *jamā* was 1,484,320 *dāms* or Rs. 37,108 in Akbar's

* See *Ain-i-Akbari* (Jarrett), pp. 136—138, and Appendix to Fifth Report of the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, pp. 358, 340, 354, 392 and 399.

time. Net *Ausil* and *Abwāb* (regular and extraordinary collections) of Silbarsā before the Dīwāni was Rs. 92,226, net *Ausil* and *Abwāb* in 1172 B.S. (1765 A.D.) as settled by Muhammad Raza Khān was Rs. 98,366. Its area in 1876 was 151,758 acres or 237·12 square miles and the land revenue was £10,352-2s. (Rs. 1,03,571). Its present area is 157,708 acres with a land revenue of Rs. 1,03,431.

In the case of the last *parganā* it is lucky that we have in the possession of the Nawāb of Bogrā, its present proprietor, a number of *sanads* granted by the Moslem rulers, which help us not only to trace the gradual increase of the land revenne of the *parganā*, but also give us an insight into the system of the Land Revenue Administration during the latter days of the Mughal empire and the earlier days of English rule.

The earliest of these *sanads* is one granted by Alamgir, dated 1086 A.H. (1668 A.D.) creating Saiad Ahmad Chaudhuri of Silbarsā in place of one Dunichānd, who was the original Chaudhuri, and who, it is alleged, had defaulted to pay land revenue to the *sarkār*. The revenue was fixed at Rs. 37,203 per year and Saiad Ahmad had to pay a *nazar* of Rs. 30,000.

Saiad Ahmad died in 1110 A.H., and his wife became Chaudhurāni. But Ahmad's daughter, and the daughter's son Golām Rāziuddin, approached Nawāb Sujā-ud-daullā of Bengal, with the result that a *sanad*, dated 1143 A.H., was granted, creating Rāziuddin Chaudhuri of Silbarsā. The revenue was raised from Rs 37,203 to Rs. 57,435 and Rāziuddin had to pay a *nazar* of Rs. 10,000. A reference to the ruling power again became necessary when Rāziuddin was dispossessed by the widow of Saiad Ahmad. Nawāb Ali Vardi Khān of Bengal divided the *parganā* between Rāziuddin and Badiuzzamān Chaudhuri, giving the former 9 annas of the *zamīndāri*, and the latter 7 annas of it. The next two *sanads* relate to the period when the Dīwāni had been assumed by the British. The first is dated 1777 A.D., and was granted by the emperor Shāh Alam to Atā Husain Chaudhuri, to whom half of Silbarsā was now granted. The last document is dated 4th May 1789, corresponding to 24th Baishākh, 1196 B.S., and is a grant to Saiad Akbar Husain, the grandson of Rāziuddin, and bears both the seal of the emperor and signature of the Collector of Dinājpur.

It may be noticed, that in most of these *sanads*, besides the injunction to pay revenue regularly, the *zamīndār* is also enjoined:—

(1) To treat the tenants with consideration, and keep them contented, and encourage them to bring their holdings under cultivation.

(2) To take care of the public roads, and to see that travellers have no difficulty in journeying through his estate.

(3) Not to give shelter to thieves and highway robbers within his estate.

In case of any property being stolen, the *zamīndār*, in whose *zamīndāri* the theft occurred, was responsible for the arrest of the offenders.

Besides these conditions the last *sanad* adds:—

(4) That the *zamīndār* is not to take interest, *nazar*, *salāmi*, *bāzejamā*, *marcha (sair)* from the *rāiyats*.

(5) That he is not to resume *debottar*, *brahmottar*, *madadmāsh*, *pirān*, or *fakirān* land, gardens, tanks, etc., without the permission of the Government, nor create any such new rights without the same authority.

Early British period. Though the East India Company succeeded to the Diwāni of Bengal, Bihār and Orissa in 1765, it was not till 1771 that they assumed, by the agency of their own servants, the direct management of the revenues. When as a result of the grant of the Diwāni, it became necessary for the Company's servants to undertake the administration of the land revenue, it was found that they had no experience and no knowledge of the system of Land Revenue Collection then prevailing in the country, nor was there any system of written rules and principles to guide them. Accordingly the revenue was for some years collected on the old Mughal system. The *zamīndārs* or Government farmers were recognised as having a right to collect the revenue from the actual cultivators, but no principle of assessment existed. The assessments were made for five years at one period, and for one year at another; while abuses prevailed as much in the collection of the revenue due to Government as in the realisation of the rents due to *zamīndārs*.

The Permanent Settlement. It was the object of Lord Cornwallis, almost from the moment of his arrival, to enquire into these abuses, to redress grievances and to provide for the well-being of the cultivating community, the security of the *zamīndārs*, and the interest of the East India Company by one equitable code and system. With this object in view, the decennial settlement was commenced in 1789 and completed in 1791. No attempt was, however, made to measure the fields or calculate the out-turn, as had been done by Akbar, and as is now done whenever settlements are made in the British provinces. The amount to be paid in the future was fixed by reference to what had been paid in the past. At first the settlement was called decennial, but in 1793, under orders from the Court of Directors, dated September 19th, 1792, it was declared permanent. The total assessment amounted to *Sikkā* Rs. 2,68,00,989, or about 3 millions sterling for Bengal. A proclamation was issued on the 22nd of March 1793, by which the Governor-General in Council declared that the *zamīndārs*, independent *tālukdārs* and other actual proprietors of land, with whom the decennial settlement had been concluded, would be

allowed to hold their estates at the same assessment for ever, but that "no claims for remission or suspension of rent were to be admitted on any account, and lands of proprietors were to be invariably sold for arrears." Proprietors were also declared to have the privilege of transferring their lands without the sanction of Government, and partition or division of estates was to be freely allowed. This proclamation was afterwards included in the Statute Book as Regulation I of 1793.

The permanent settlement embraced the whole of the present Bogrā district, which at that time was included in the districts of Rājshāhi, Rangpur and Dinājpur.

Land tenures.

An exhaustive description of the various forms of land tenures of the district is to be found in the Statistical Account. The tenures were divided into three classes:—(1) ordinary revenue-paying tenures; (2) revenue-free and rent-free tenures; and (3) service-tenures.

It will be convenient however, to adopt, a more up-to-date classification, and consider the land tenures under the following heads:—(1) revenue-paying estates and rent-paying tenancies; (2) revenue-free estates and rent-free tenures. "Service-tenures" really belong to the second class. Under the first division again we may consider separately:—

(1) Independent revenue-paying estates; (2) subordinate tenures; (3) *rāiyati* holdings; and (4) under-*rāiyats'* holdings.

Revenue-paying estates.

Ordinary revenue-paying estates cover by far the greater part of the area of the district. All estates paying revenue to Government direct are known as *zamīndāris*, though some of them are really only "independent *tāluks*."

The *zamīndāri* in Musalmān times was the unit of revenue collection and seems at first to have coincided in size with a *parganā*. *Zamīndāris* were grouped in varying numbers into areas of revenue audit, rather than revenue collection, called *sarkārs*. When the East India Company assumed the Dīwāni of Bengal in 1765, the *zamīndāri* continued to bear in very many cases the same relation to the *parganā*; but the latter had been broken up into minor divisions called *tappās*, *kismats*, and *tarafs*, whilst the word *zamīndāri* had begun to assume the meaning it now usually bears, that of the English word "estate," a landed property of more or less considerable extent held with absolute proprietary right. The total number of landholders within the present limits of Bogrā, who then held *zamīndāris*, cannot now be ascertained, but the greater part of the district was held by three *zamīndārs*, the north-western *parganās* formed part of the Dinājpur Rāj; the south and south-eastern, an outlying estate of the Nātor Rāj; and the centre round the Bogrā town was owned by an old Musalmān family known as the Silbarsā *zamīndārs*.

Independent or *Khārijā tāluks* form a species of tenure which is distinguishable from the *zamīndāri* of the present day only by

the history of its origin. They are borne on the Collectorate rent-roll or *tauzi*, as distinct estates-in-chief, each having a separate registry number. They existed under the Muhammadan rule, were conferred by the Government, and were included within the limits of a *parganā*. Regulation VIII of 1793, section 5, defines those *tālukdārs*, who are to be considered actual proprietors of the land comprised in their *tāluks*, to be those (1) who received deeds of sale or gift of the land from the *zamīndār*, or *sanads* from the khālsā, making over to them his proprietary rights therein; (2) who were in possession of *tāluks* formed before the *zamīndār* or his ancestors succeeded to the *zamīndāri*; (3) whose *tāluks* comprised land which never had been the property of the *zamīndār*, to whom they then paid revenue, or his ancestors. These independent *tāluks* were allowed to pay revenue to Government direct and are therefore called *huzuri*. In the same manner that the smaller under-tenures known as *jots*, which, as a special privilege, are allowed to pay their rent at the Chief Manager's office, or Naib's *kachāri*, instead of through the inferior rent collectors, are styled *huzuri jots*.

Subordinate 'Tenures.' *Taluks.*

Among the tenures those known as *tāluks* are the most important. *Tāluk*, as ordinarily used, is a vague term, but in Bogrā it always implies a dependent tenure, heritable and permanent, with the right of subletting. Such tenures were created by the *zamīndārs*, not only with the object of escaping the labour and risk attendant upon direct management, but also with a view to bringing large tracts of waste lands under cultivation. Thus many *zamīndārs* sublet considerable portions of their estates in perpetuity, in consideration of a bonus paid down and a fixed annual rent.

These dependent *tāluks* are ordinarily known as *shikmi tāluks* from "*shikm*," the belly, literally implying "in the belly of the *zamīndāri*." The latest Road Cess return shows the number of such *tāluks* to be 45. Numerous *tāluks* have, however, been shown as *jots*.

Mukarrari tāluks.

Mukarrari or *istimrāri* or *maurusi tāluks* are tenures granted in perpetuity at a fixed rent, which is not liable to enhancement on any ground. Properly speaking, the first term refers to the perpetual nature of the tenure; the second refers to the rent being fixed, but does not of itself imply that the tenure is heritable; the third means that the tenure is hereditary, but implies nothing as to the fixity of rent. These distinctions are not, however, now observed, and all three terms are applied to tenures held at a fixed rent and from generation to generation. These tenures existed before British rule took the place of the old Mughal government, and some of them are still to be found in the district, but not under the name *tāluks* but *jots*.

Jangalburi tāluks.

Jangalburi tāluks are tenures granted for the reclamation of waste land. The chief feature of this tenure, as distinguished from that of an *istimrāri tāluk*, is that the holder of the *tāluk*

is allowed, as a rule, to enjoy the land rent-free for a certain period, and then, as cultivation advances, he pays a gradually increasing rent, till the highest rate stipulated in the lease is reached. The maximum rent thus arrived at is considered to be fixed permanently and is not liable to further enhancement.

Patni tāluks. *Patni tāluks* are a species of tenure, which originated on the estate of the Rājā of Burdwān, and were first formally recognised by Government by Regulation VIII of 1819, which declared these tenures to be valid, transferable by sale, gift, or otherwise, and answerable for the holder's personal debts. A *patni tāluk* is held by the lessee and his heir for a rent fixed in perpetuity, the tenant is called upon to furnish collateral security for the rent and for his conduct generally, and in the event of an arrear occurring, the *zamīndār* can, on application to the Collector, bring the *tāluk* to sale; and if the sale does not yield a sufficient amount to make good the balance of rent due at the time, the remaining properties of the defaulter become answerable. The surplus of the sale-proceeds over the balance of rent due and the expenses of the sale goes to the ousted *tālukdār*. The majority of the *patnis* in Bogrā district are said to have been given in consequence of the *zamīndārs* being unable to manage their property themselves. Their estates are described as having been encumbered with debts and overrun with jungle. Such was the case with Dihi Beauleah in *parganā* Pratāpbāzu, a considerable estate which was nearly a waste till given in *patni*. There are now 1,906 *patni tāluks* in the district, mostly in the north in the fiscal divisions of Apail, Khetlāl, Khāngar, Chātnagar and Sagunā. They are, as a rule, small in this district, particularly so when given for the purpose of jungle clearing.

Darpatnis and *Sepatnis* are under-tenures created by a *patnidār*, by which he transfers his own rights in the whole or part of his *tāluk*. A *patni* of the second degree is called a *dar-patni*, and a *patni* of the third degree is called a *se-patni*. Regulation VIII of 1819 secures for both these sub-tenures the same rights and immunities as attach to *patnis* themselves, in so far as concerns the grantor of such under-tenures. The present number of *darpatnis* and *sepatnis* in the district is 175 and 24 respectively.

Ijārās. *Ijārā* is the common name for a farming lease held by a professed middleman from the original landholder. The *ijārādār* manages the estate farmed out to him, at his own risk, and is remunerated by a fixed percentage on the rent he collects. The percentage is either paid by the *rāiyat* over and above his proper rent or is deducted from the gross rent due to the landlord. The percentage in Bogrā varies from one anna seven pies to two annas per rupee. The number of *ijārās* shown in the latest Road Cess returns is 215. In 1874, the *zamīndārs* returned 171 *ijārās*. The following descriptions of *ijārās* are found:—

When the farm is for a term of years and is granted on the receipt of an advance from the lessee, it is called a *zarpeshgi ijārā*, from *zar* (gold) and *peshgi* (advance). When the *ijārā* or farm is given as a security for the repayment of a definite sum of money, borrowed upon the usufruct of the land, the lease is called *ijārā dāisudi*. It is in fact a mortgage with possession. *Rasadi Ijārā* is a temporary lease held at a rent, increasing from year to year according to the terms agreed upon. This kind of *ijārā* is granted generally for the reclamation of waste lands and is found in large number in *thānā* Pānchbībī. The number of such tenures, returned by the *zamīndārs* in 1901, was 100. A *maurusi* or *mukarrari ijārā* is a farm granted with hereditary title to the holder, at a rent fixed in perpetuity according to the terms of a written engagement. In practice it is hard to distinguish it from a *maurusi jot*, but it may be said to be characterised by always being founded on written contract, and on being usually granted on payment of a *nazar*, or premium, by the grantee. This kind of tenure is found in *parganās* Khāttā, Jahāngirpur, Kāligāon, Bārbakpur, and Apail. The *zamīndārs* in 1874 returned 37 of these tenures, but only 16 were returned at the Revaluation which commenced in 1901.

Dar-Ijārā is an under-tenure of the second degree created by an *Ijārādār*, conveying the same rights which he himself holds. This form of tenure is most common in the west of the district.

Jot Pradhāni.

Jot Pradhāni, as distinguished from *saraswari jot*, which means a holding of a *rāiyat*, is a tenure, which originated at the time when the whole body of the villagers leased the land of the village from the *zamīndār* through the *pradhān* or headman. It is usually assessed at a rate which is lower than that of the ordinary *rāiyats*, and is granted as a reward for services. The holders of such *jots* are generally allowed as a favour to pay their rent at the head office of the landlord instead of to the village rent collectors.

Istimrāri jots.

Istimrāri jots are really permanent tenures and are similar to *mukarrari jots*, those granted by Government being usually specified by this name. In 1860, thirteen of these tenures were granted in *mahāl* Chāwalpārā for the excavation of tanks. The largest *istimrāri jot* in the district was the property of Mr. Payter, who was the farmer of the Government estates in the police division of Pānchbībī. Seventy-seven such *jots* were returned by the *zamīndārs* in 1901.

Rāiyati holdings.

Rāiyats' holdings are commonly known in this district simply as *jots* and sometimes as *saraswari jots* to distinguish them from *jot pradhāni*. But although the holding of a *rāiyat* is called a *jot*, yet as is the case in Rangpur, a fairly large number of *jotdārs* are really tenure-holders, and their *jots*, which sometimes comprise more than a thousand *bighās*, are really tenures and not *rāiyati* holdings. The total number of *jots* returned by the *zamīndārs* at the last Revaluation was 3,238, but it is

impossible to say how many of these are tenures and how many are *rāiyati* holdings. The *zamīndārs* also returned 55 *dar jots.*

The rent of a *rāiyati* holding is generally paid in cash, but when a *rāiyat* pays in kind, he is called a *bhāgdār* or *bhāgjotdār.*

Jots with or without occupancy rights under the Tenancy Act are transferable only where there is a custom or usage to that effect. In this district, it is said, there is no such recognised custom, at least it is a controversial point, the *zamīndār* saying that there is no such custom or usage, while the *rāiyats* contend that there is; but, as a matter of fact, transfers by sale, gift, etc., of these *jots* are too numerous to be overlooked. In such cases the consent of the *zamīndār* is not obtained by the payment of a *nazar* before the transfer is effected, but after the transfer, the transferee generally pays *nazar*, registers his name, and secures rent-receipts in his own name from the *zamīndāri* office. The *zamīndār* does not directly recognise the right of transfer, but takes an *istāfā* (surrender) from the last tenant and makes out a fresh lease in the name of the purchaser.

Maurusi or Mukarrari jots.

When the right of transfer has been specifically granted by the landlord and the holding is held at a rent fixed in perpetuity, it is called a *maurusi* or *mukarrari jot.* The holders of such tenancies are, in the Tenancy Act, known as "*rāiyats* at fixed rent or fixed rate of rent." These *jots* are heritable as well as transferable. Six hundred and seventeen *mukarrāri jots* and 36 *dar-mukarrari jots* were returned in 1901. But these are not all *rāiyati* holdings and include a certain number of tenures also.

Under-*rāiyats'* holdings.

Korfā jot is the common appellation in the district of the holding of an under-*rāiyat*, whether paying rent in cash or in kind. They are held under the *rāiyats* When the under-*rāiyat* pays his rent in cash his holding is called a '*dar-jot*,' as distinguished from that of a *bhāgidār*, who pays rent in kind.

Revenue-free estates and rent-free tenures. *Lakhirāj.*

The second great class of land tenures found in Bogrā district comprises the revenue-free estates and rent-free tenures. *Lākhirāj* (an Arabic term meaning "without revenue") is the common name of all tenures which, being estates-in-chief, are free from payment of the *sadr jamā*, or Government revenue; or being subordinate tenures, pay no rent to their parent estate. The oldest tenures in Bogrā of this description are of Musalmān creation, some dating as far back as four centuries. The Hindu *lākhirājs* are not older than the beginning of the eighteenth century, and were created principally by Rājā Rām Jiban and Rāni Bhawāni of Nātor, and by Rājā Rāmnāth of Dinājpur. A few of the Muhammadan rent-free tenures were granted directly by the emperor of Delhi, but the great majority by the Nawāb Nāzim of Murshidābād, and by his lieutenants at Dacca and Ghorāghāt. Many of the smaller grants were made by the *zamīndārs* and by the inferior Musalmān officers, on the pretext of assisting religion and its devotees, but often by fraud or collusion to benefit themselves. When the English obtained the Dīwāni

they undertook to respect *ākhirāj* grants, and accordingly exempted them from land revenue. Advantage was taken of this regard for native customs to make an attempt to extend and multiply these tenures, with the effect of defrauding the Government. No measures were, however, taken for stopping this state of things till 1793. But by Regulation XIX of that year, only such of the *hukumi* grants, or those made by *zamīndārs*, were declared to be valid as had been made before the 12th August 1765, the date of the Company's accession to the Dīwāni, provided also that the grantees had obtained possession previous to that date. At the same time all grants made after that date, but before 1790, which had not been conferred by Government or by some officer empowered to do so, were declared invalid, unless they concerned lands not exceeding ten *bighās*, or three and one-third acres, granted and appropriated *bonâ fide* for religious purposes. Regulation XXXVII of 1793 enacted nearly similar provisions in the case of *bādshāhi*, or Imperial grants. Those made before the 12th August 1765, if the grantees were in actual possession before that date, and no subsequent resumption was effected by competent authority, were declared valid. All *lākhirāj* lands, which were exempted from payment of revenue under the provisions of the above-mentioned Regulations, are called *bahāli* (established) *lākhirāj*, to distinguish them from those resumed or *bāzyāfti lākhirāj*, which thereby became revenue-paying. The number of revenue-free estates in the district is thirty-nine.

Rent-free tenures.

Debottar lands are those rent-free grants, whose proceeds are applied to defraying the expenses of Hindu idols and temples. When a *debottar* is dedicated to Vishnu it is called *Vishnuttar*, *Vishnubritti*, etc.; and when Siva is the god to whom the grant appertains, it is called *Sivottar*. These lands are indivisible and cannot be alienated, except for the benefit of the idols; but temporary leases of them, extending during the life of the *sebāit* or *mahant*, the manager and superintendent of the establishment, who is often the grantor, or his heir, may be given for the benefit of the idol, or for the repairs, etc., of the temples. The number of *debottar* tenures in Bogrā district in 1874 appears to have been 1,707, but only 305 were returned in 1901. Out of these 35 were returned as *Sivottar*. The most important *debottar* in this district consists of the land attached to the Bhawāni Thākurāni in Bhawānipur, a description of which will be found elsewhere. Of the large grants of land made to this goddess by Rāni Bhawāni of Nātor, a considerable portion was resumed by Government in 1838, and settled at half rates with the Nātor Rājā, in whom is vested the hereditary office of *sebāit*.

Brahmottar lands are estates granted rent-free exclusively for the support of Brāhmans. This species is one of the most numerous *lākhirāj* tenures in the Bogrā district, 3,604 of such tenures being returned in 1874, though only 903 were returned

in 1901. *Vaishnabottar* is land granted rent-free for the support of *Vishnab* devotees. Six such tenures were returned in 1901. *Sannyāsottars* were granted for the support of *Sannyāsis* or religious ascetics. *Baidyottars* were grants to Hindu physicians. *Mahātthāns* were grants to Kāyasthas of respectability. *Bhātottar* were grants to *Bhāts* or bards.

Pirpal lands were granted rent-free strictly for the performance of religious rites at the tombs of *pīrs*, *ghāzis* and *auliyās*, that is, saints and other holy men of the Muhammadan faith. Lands assigned for the maintenance of mosques are, however, very frequently classed as *pirpal*. They are transferable, and liable for debts incurred for objects similar to those for which they were originally granted. The most remarkable is that at Mahāsthān, which measures some 650 acres. The large majority of these tenures are found in the west and north-west of the district. In 1874, the *zamīndārs* returned 2,726 such tenures; but in 1901 they were shown to be 1,086 in number. *Āimas* in Bogrā district are invariably tenures held rent-free by learned or pious Musalmāns, or for religious or charitable uses connected with Muhammadanism. They existed long before the English accession to the Dīwāni, and were recognised by the British Government, as heritable and transferable on the same terms as other *lākhirāj* holdings. Eighty-four *āimas* were returned in 1901.

Wakf (tied up) is the term applied to grants of land appropriated to Muhammadan charitable or pious uses. They are not liable for the debts of the grantor, whose rights cease as soon as the act of endowment is completed. They are not alienable, though temporarily transferable, in the same manner as Hindu *debottar* lands for the benefit of the endowment. A tenure of this kind is always managed by the *mutawāli* or superintendent, whose interests in it may be for his individual life or hereditary. The number of tenures of the kind is not given in any record or return, but they are said to be numerous. The largest is the Murāil trust estate.

Madad-Māsh is land granted rent-free for the support of learned or pious Muhammadans. It is hereditary, transferable, and liable for the debts of the grantee. Only 14 such tenures have been returned in 1901.

Bhogottar is the general appellation for lands granted rent-free in perpetuity for the enjoyment of the profits thereof, as the name expresses. Tenures given as rewards, for which there is no specific name, are so called. They are transferable, and liable for the debts of the grantee. The *zamīndārs* have shown 348 such tenures in 1901.

Service-tenures.

Another class of rent-free tenures in Bogrā consists of lands granted rent-free as remuneration for personal service performed by the grantee. No military rent-free tenures exist in Bogrā district, and no kind of service-tenure is mentioned in the

records of the district offices. The *zamīndārs* in 1874 returned 3,551 such tenures, most of which were apparently *rāiyati* holdings. These were granted to and held by *purohits* or priests for the performance of Hindu religious rites; by *behārās* or palanquin-carriers; by *dhobās* or washermen; by *nāpits* or barbers, for assisting at weddings and other ceremonies; by *kumārs* or potters, for supplying earthen vessels to the temples; and by *pāiks, gumashtās* and *tahsīldārs* for assisting in collecting rent. No service land is held in this district by *chaukidārs* or village watchmen. Few service-tenures are now granted; on the contrary, many old grants are resumed on the ground that the service stipulated for is no longer required or performed, and are leased out to the original holders or to new tenants. All these tenures are known by the common name of *chākrān*, derived from the Persian word *chākar*, meaning a servant.

Government estates The Jaipur Government estates.

The Jaipur Government estates lie between the parallels of 24° 59′ and 25° 13′ north latitude, and between 88° 59′ and 89° 10′ east longitude, in the north-western portion of Bogrā district, bordering on the districts of Dinājpur and Rājshāhi. They comprise lands in 153 villages, mostly in the jurisdiction of Pānchbībī *thānā*. Little or nothing was known of them before their purchase by Government more than half a century ago, but the existence of a great many old tanks, the ruins of many Hindu temples and Muhammadan mosques amidst dense jungles, the presence of fruit trees, etc., show that this place was once prosperous and well populated.

It was between the years 1828 and 1837 that these estates were purchased by Government. According to the last *Gazetteer*, the estates escheated to Government, from the inability of the former proprietors to pay the revenue, a fact which, according to Mr. Russell (a former Collector in 1854) was due to the high rates at which the estates were originally assessed. When put up to sale, they found no bidders and were bought in by Government at a nominal valuation. It also appears that at that time the population of this part of the district was most scanty, on account of its extreme unhealthiness, and a large portion of the area was uncultivated. "In localities such as these," runs the account, "cultivation is carried on under many difficulties and disadvantages. Jungle grows up rapidly in the *pali* soil and pigs and other animals commit great depredations." The country, however, presents a different spectacle now. The Northern Bengal State Railway runs within a couple of miles of Khanjanpur, the seat of the Manager's office, and a broad metalled road connects it with Jaipur Hāt railway station. Schools, dispensaries and other public buildings have sprung up and mark the progress of civilisation in these parts. Jungle is being fast cut down and large tracts of country have been brought under the plough within recent years, and the *rāiyats* are amongst the most contented and prosperous in the whole of the district.

The estates were originally within the jurisdiction of the Dinājpur district, but were transferred to Bogrā shortly after their purchase by Government. Some have very recently been transferred to the Naogāon subdivision of the Rājshāhi district. For a short time after their purchase, the rents were realised directly by the Collector. In the course of 1837 and 1838, however, the estates were (with the exception of Dharanji which was let to another farmer) let in farm to an indigo-planter, Mr. J. W. Payter, for a period of ten years. Lot Dharanji was also later on, in 1841, let to him. The lease was renewed from time to time with Mr. Payter and his nephew, Mr. G. R. Payter, up to 1878, when the estates were taken under *khās* management. When Government took the estates under direct management, the total rental amounted to Rs. 38,358. During 1893-94 when a survey and settlement was undertaken under the Bengal Tenancy Act the demand was Rs. 39,872. During the years 1894-95, 1895-96 and 1896-97 the demand was stationary, as the settlement proceedings were then progressing. In 1897-98, after the completion of the operation, the rental was enhanced to Rs. 51,068. The total rental for the year 1907-08 was Rs. 59,978. The increase in recent years is due to the settlement of waste lands.

Manage-ment.

The management of the estates is conducted by a special agency under a Manager who is at present (1908) a Deputy-Collector. The establishment of the Manager, which includes a Kanungo and a Market Inspector, cost Rs. 181 per month, during 1907-08. The rent is collected in the villages by *patwāris*, who are remunerated by a commission of 3 per cent. on their collections. There are 43 village *mandals*, whose duties are to help the *patwāris* in the collection of rent, preserve the boundary pillars, look after the *khās mahāl* trees, and report to the Manager any matter of unusual occurrence taking place in their respective circles. These *mandals* are jointly given a commission of annas 8 per cent. on the total amount collected by the *patwāris*. A certain sum, suited to the requirements of the estate, is annually spent in carrying out works of improvement in the estate. Rs. 8,267 for management, Rs. 4,500 for works of improvement, and Rs. 1,713 for the management of Government markets, were sanctioned by the Board of Revenue in 1907-08. The grant for improvement was spent in carrying out experiments in connection with introduction of better varieties of sugar-cane; in sanitary works, such as the sinking of masonry wells and clearing of old tanks; and in miscellaneous improvements, such as the construction of buildings for schools, and the metalling of the Jaipur road.

Education.

There were 17 *Pāthshālās* (Primary and Upper Primary schools) in 1907-08 in the estate, against 15 in the previous year, the total number of boys being 621. There is also a Middle English school at Khanjanpur, a Middle Vernacular school

at Jamālganj, and a *Madrāsā* at Bhadsa. A new building has recently been constructed for the Khanjanpur school, and the number on the roll of the school was 88 on June 30th, 1908. It is in contemplation to convert the Middle Vernacular school at Jamālganj into a Middle English school, and with that object a qualified Head-master has been appointed. The *Madrāsā* has 66 boys on the roll. The annual grant-in-aid to the Primary schools from the one per cent. grant for education was Rs. 606 during 1907-08.

Land Revenue Administration.

Present revenue roll and incidence of Land Revenue.

The revenue roll contains 704 permanently-settled revenue-paying estates (*zamīndāri* and *tāluk*), and 39 revenue-free estates not liable to the payment of Government revenue. In the year ending 31st March 1908, the permanently-settled area of the district was shown to be 841,527 acres and the temporarily-settled area to be 28,233 acres. The temporarily-settled area consisted of the Jaipur Government estates. The total revenue payable by the permanently-settled area came to Rs. 4,33,881 and therefore the incidence of land revenue per acre within this area was 8 annas 3 pies per acre. The land revenue (rent) payable by the temporarily-settled area was Rs. 59,978 and therefore the incidence was Rs. 2-8-1 per acre. The revenue from miscellaneous sources amounted to Rs. 1,858, the total land revenue from all sources amounting to Rs. 4,95,717. The incidence of land revenue per head of population has been shown to be 9 annas 3 pies. But as has been stated above, the figure representing land revenue for the temporarily-settled area is really rent; while on the other hand, there are 4,251 acres of unassessed revenue-free land in the district of which the population could not be separately ascertained.

Growth of land revenue.

As the major portion of the district is permanently assessed, the only source of increase of land revenue are the temporarily-settled Government estates. As we have seen the total rental of these estates rose from Rs. 39,872 in 1893-94 to Rs. 59,978 in 1907-08.

Realisation of Government revenue.

The Government revenue of the permanently-settled estates is realised under Act XI of 1859 annually in four *kists*, *viz.*, June, September, January and March. If any proprietor fails to pay up the revenue of the *kist* by the sunset of the latest date of payment, the arrears due are realised by the sale of the property in default. The original severity of the rule has, however, been gradually modified, and the need for its exercise has gradually decreased as the incidence of assessment has become lighter. Thus during the year 1907-08, though 39 became liable to sale for failure to pay the revenue in time, no estate was actually sold, as the proprietors paid up on receipt of a warning notice. In the case of the Government estates, the property of defaulting *rāiyats*, who fail to pay rent in time, may be attached and sold under the provisions of the Certificate Act. In 1907-08, 70 certificates were issued against defaulters, but no holdings

were actually sold. During 1907-08 the rate of collection of the total revenue demand of the district reached 99·65 per cent.

Survey and Settlement.

The only large estates in the district, which have been brought under survey and settlement, are the Jaipur Government estates. At the settlement concluded in 1897-98, the area assessed to rent was found to be 22,223 acres, and the assessment was Rs. 51,068. The average rent per acre came to Rs. 2-4-9, and the rates varied from annas 12 to Rs. 4-8-0 per acre for low lands, and from annas 12 to Rs. 3-12-0 for high lands. The rates payable by under-*rāiyats* were, however, much higher. The survey cost 5 annas, and the settlement 13 annas per acre. The total expenditure came to Rs. 47,461-11-4, of which Rs. 39,396-3-4 was borne by Government, and Rs. 6,728 by private *zamīndārs*, the remainder Rs. 1,337-8-0 being covered by court-fees and miscellaneous receipts.

The Murāil *wakf* estate, a petty estate with an area of 270 acres held by 430 tenants, is the only other one in which a settlement of rent has been made. This was undertaken at the request of the manager, and resulted in an increase of the rental from Rs. 624-3-2 to Rs. 858-13-3.

Relation between landlords and tenants.

The relations between the landlords and their tenants are generally peaceful and satisfactory, though the majority of the landlords are Hindus and the tenants are mostly Muhammadans. In a very few cases the relations have become strained owing to attempts on the part of the *zamīndārs* to enhance rent. Recently, in one case, a *zamīndār* failing to enhance rents amicably has applied for a survey and record of rights under the Bengal Tenancy Act. The figures supplied by the civil court for the years 1903 to 1907 show a slight tendency to increase in the numbers of suits for arrears of rent, but the largest number in any one year was 3,001, and the total number of suits for ejectment during the five years was only 190, and of suits for enhancement of rent only 11.

CHAPTER XI.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

History of administrative changes. State of the country during early British rule and creation of the district.

The district of Bogrā is of recent formation, as compared with the great districts by which it is surrounded, dating only from the year 1821. It was found necessary at that time to provide additional facilities for the administration of criminal justice in the outlying eastern police divisions of Dinājpur, Rangpur, and Rājshāhi, which had gained notoriety for *dākāiti* or gang-robbery, and other crimes of violence. "It was to protect the people from the grinding tyranny of *dākāits* and *zamīndārs*," says the *Bagurār Shetihāsh*, "that the district was created." The state of this part of the country in the first quarter of the nineteenth century is graphically described by Mr. E. Strachey, 3rd Judge of Circuit, in letters addressed by him in 1808 to the *Nizāmat Adālat* at Murshidābād, from which the following extracts are made:—

"That dacoity is very prevalent in Rājshāhi (to which the major portion of the district then belonged) has been often stated, but if its vast extent were known, if the scenes of horror, the murders, the burnings, the excessive cruelties, which are continually perpetrated here, were properly represented to Government, I am confident that some measures would be adopted to remedy the evil; certainly there is not an individual belonging to the Government who does not anxiously wish to save the people from robbery and massacre, yet the situation of the people is not sufficiently attended to. It cannot be denied that, in point of fact, there is no protection for persons or property; and that the present wretched, mechanical, inefficient system of police is a mere mockery."

"The dacoits know much better than we how to preserve their power; they have, with great success, established a respect for their order, by speedy, certain, and severe punishments, and by judicious arrangements for removing obstacles, and for facilitating the execution of their wishes."

The learned Judge then goes on to say: "On my way through the northern part of this *zilā*, I had some conversation with a *zamīndār* and a police *dārogā*, who have distinguished themselves by their exertions to apprehend dacoits. I exhorted them to use every effort for the seizure of Pundita and Kartica, two notorious *sirdārs*, whose gangs have long infested that part of the country. They told me that it was impossible to get any information about the great dacoits; that the houses of all the

principal inhabitants were open to them; yet, that nobody dared mention their names, for fear of being murdered. The *dārogā* told me that orders issued by the police were immediately communicated to Pundita. They attributed the success of the dacoits to the same cause, that everybody else does; namely, the protection given them by the *zamīndārs* and police officers, and other people of power and influence in the country. Everything I hear and see, and read on this subject, serves to convince me of the truth of this statement."

"The principal persons, who have lands or farms in the northern parts of this district, where there are most dacoits, are the *Foujdāri* sarishtadars; Unoopinder Nārāin, and the peshkar Ruheem Oodeen, Kishen Sindial, a dewanny mohrir, and Domeen Geer Goseyn and Anoop Moonshee, who hold no offices under government."

"Most of the police *dārogās* seem to be under the influence of Ruheem Oodeen; Anoop Moonshee and Domeen Geer accuse each other of harbouring dacoits, and there is every reason to believe they are both guilty; for a great many notorious dacoits, and harbourers of dacoits, live on their estates, as well on Ruheem Oodeen's, and Unoopinder Nārāin's, and Kishen Sindial's, although it is not easy to apprehend them; or if they are apprehended, to convict them." *

In his next letter, he also encloses some "*Arzees* of the *dārogā* of Sherpore," which, though a century old, read very much like police reports of the present day. In one, dated 11th Falgoon, "The *dārogā* gives an account of his expedition to apprehend a number of dacoits; and of his apprehending Jeetoo, and others." "The *dārogā* speaks of the neglect and connivance of the *zamīndār*, and of the neighbouring *dārogā*, and mentions the haunts of the dacoits." In his diary of the 26th Jeyt, "the *dārogā* complains of the dreadful consequences of the release of notorious dacoits, who, for want of evidence, had been acquitted by the Court of Circuit."†

As the country was at this time infested by *dākāits*, some of whom had earned a wide-spread notoriety, a short digression here about them will not be out of place. The most notorious *dākāit* of these parts was one Majnu Fakīr, who with his gang spread havoc and ruin in this part of the province, during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, during the rule of the Nawābs of Murshidābād. According to the *Shetihāsh* his head-quarters were at Madārganj near Gohāil. He is reported to have been so daring as to have often looted the *khājānā* (revenue) of the Nawābs. A contemporary poet, named Panchānan Dās, described him to be as terrible as the god *Jama* (death). According to the same authority, he used to go about very smartly dressed and with a

* Page 587, Appendix to Fifth Report of the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company.

† Page 592, Appendix to Fifth Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company.

following of banner-bearers. His favourite mode of proceedings was to set fire to a village in the middle of the day, and then plunder it. His followers were armed with fire-arms, which they freely used. It is said that the ancestors of the present Rājā of Gouripur had to leave Koraibāri, their original home, on account of the depredations of this *dākāit*. The manner of the downfall of this man is interesting, as showing the state of the country at the time when the English began to govern it. In 1777, a body of Nāgās, a caste of up-country religious fanatics, to the number of two hundred, came to this district, from the north-west, with what object cannot be determined. In the Punjab they were noted marauders. The people say they were specially commissioned by Providence to destroy the pest of *dākāiti*. They are said to have been well mounted on large horses, and to have been armed with long swords. They and the followers of Majnu Fakīr met in battle at daybreak, and fought till noon, when only the infant son of the leader of the robber gang survived on the side of the *dākāits* The swords of the Nāgās are described as lopping off the heads of the robbers with as much ease as if they were cutting the stalks of plantain trees. A *nullah* near the scene of the encounter is still known as the Fakirkātā *khāl*, and is about a couple of miles from the modern village of Chāmpāpur. The Nāgās do not seem to have stayed for plunder, and at once proceeded southward and then eastward to Mymensingh and Goalpārā. In the latter place they had a fight with some semi-Portuguese settlers, and were then lost sight of. Majnu's son, Cherāg Ali Fakīr, kept up his father's profession for some time, till he was carried off by fever. The country enjoyed a short respite after his death, but soon the depredations of Pandit Shāh made that bandit's name a terror throughout these parts. He and his gang lived at Majirā, a village on the road-side midway between Bogrā and Sherpur, which must have once been a place of much importance, judging by the great number of bricks lying about, and the almost innumerable tanks which are still to be found there. An altar of the goddess Kāli is still pointed out as the place where the *dākāits* offered human sacrifices. Another rendezvous of his was at Gohāil, a few miles north-west of Sherpur. He first came into notice about 1800, and for ten or twelve years plundered where and as he pleased. Mr. Strachey has thus described the doings of this *dākāit* and his associates :—" Pundita and Kartica have long been the scourge of the northern part of this district. The extent and boldness of their depredations; the many murders, burning and other cruelties which they commit; their discipline and secrecy, and the terror which they have established, are well-known. Their subordinate *sirdārs* are also well-known, and several of them have been apprehended. Jhapra, Bheeka, Sookta, Jeeto, Phuttoo, and a few others of inferior importance, are now under trial. I think it is pretty certain that the three first have been principals, in at least 10 or 12 deliberate murders; the two others may not

have committed, quite so many perhaps. As to the persons who have been burnt by them and their gangs, so as to survive but a short time, they may be hundreds." In 1812, Asād Jamā Chaudhuri, the *zamīndār* of *parganā* Silbarsā, secured Pundita and sent him for trial to the Magistrate of Rājshāhi, who sentenced him to transportation for life.

In addition to the pressing need of introducing some sort of order into this troubled part of the country, it appears that the operations of numerous Europeans, who had settled along the rivers in the east of the district as indigo and silk planters, also required supervision. With these objects, the *thānās* or police divisions of Lālbāzār, Khetlāl, and Bādalgāchhi were taken from Dinājpur; Govindaganj and Diwānganj from Rangpur; and Bogrā, Adamdīghi, and Naokhilā from Rājshāhi. These were all united in 1821 to form the new *zilā* or district of Bogrā, the criminal jurisdiction within which was vested in a new official, called the Joint-Magistrate of Bogrā. In 1832, Bogrā became a revenue-receiving centre for about half the area of its magisterial jurisdiction, and the duties of a Deputy-Collector were added to those of the Joint-Magistrate. In September 1839, the new district received a further accession to its size by the transfer of the police division of Rāiganj from Rājshāhi. In 1859, the Joint-Magistracy and Deputy-Collectorate was raised to the grade of a Magistracy and Collectorate, and Bogrā was thus finally and definitely constituted an independent district.

Though the first Magistrate-Collector was not appointed till 1859, peace and order had been established before that time. According to the *Shetihāsh*, the administrations of Perry Woodcock (1831), Thomas Tilby (1832) and George Yule (1839), and specially of the last, were conspicuous for the suppression of *dākāities* and the strict administration of justice. But apparently the suppression of *dākāits* continued to demand the attention of the authorities for some time to come, for we find during the time of Mr. J. Jackson (1857), Babu Mādhab Chandra Maitra was appointed special Police Inspector, and he succeeded, says the *Shetihāsh*, in bringing to justice the few *dākāits*, who had escaped the vigilance and iron rule of Mr. G. Yule, who had practically cleared the district of these baneful pests.

Unsatisfactory character of revenue jurisdiction.

The anomalous condition of the revenue jurisdiction early began to draw attention. Many estates in the east of Bogrā, on the banks of the Brahmaputra, paid their revenue into Rāmpur Boālia, the civil station of Rājshāhi, eighty miles away to the west on the banks of the Ganges; whilst others, situated only twelve miles south from the Bogrā head-quarters, were required to pay their revenue into the Mymensingh treasury, nearly as many miles to the east on the other side of the former river. The cause of these manifest anomalies is to be found in the gradual character of the process, by which Bogrā has grown to independence.

When a Deputy-Collector was first appointed to the district, it was decided by the Board of Revenue that he should only collect the revenue of such estates as lay entirely within his magisterial jurisdiction; while the owners of all estates, which were only partially affected by the change, were allowed the option of paying their entire revenue to their old Collectorates. In all other respects, the fiscal authority of the Deputy-Collector was made co-extensive with that which he had before exercised as Joint-Magistrate. It would seem that the choice thus permitted to the *zamīndārs* was made use of inconsiderately, for in subsequent years they began to petition that their estates might be altogether assigned to Bogrā. Disputes, also, continually arose with regard to the proper venue in revenue and rent suits.

Future adjustment.

The local officers, in repeated letters, pressed the case upon the attention of the Government; and on the 6th November 1850, the Deputy-Governor of Bengal sanctioned the transfer to Bogrā from the Collectorates of Rangpur, Dinājpur, Pābnā, Mymensingh, and Rājshāhi, of 549 estates paying a total revenue of Rs. 87,054. Before this time, only 287 estates were borne on the Bogrā revenue roll, with, however, the comparatively large rental of about two lakhs of rupees. Useful though this measure was in the way of making the criminal and revenue jurisdictions coincide, it was anything but complete. There were still a number of estates lying altogether within the magisterial limits of Bogrā, paying a revenue of Rs. 22,638, which the proprietors wished to continue to pay into other treasuries. The principle followed in their case was in accordance with the opinion of Mr Ricketts of the Revenue Board stated in the following minute :—"I would not abrogate the option hitherto followed, especially as it is more convenient that the money should be paid at Rājshāhi and may lie at some of the other treasuries; but the *tauzi* (revenue) accounts should be kept at Bogrā, and the estates should be regarded in every respect as portions of that district; and should the proprietors at any future period desire to pay at Bogrā, they should be allowed to do so without any further reference. Intimation of payments made should be sent weekly from each of the five treasuries to Bogrā, to be credited in the treasury and *tauzi* accounts, and under the same date debited as a remittance to the treasury into which they were actually paid." In after years many of these estates began to pay directly into the Bogrā treasury; but this was a matter of far less consequence than the declaration that they were to be regarded in every respect as portions of Bogrā district.

Subsequent changes in the area of the district.

About 1850 the area of Bogrā district was at its largest. The subsequent history of the changes of jurisdiction narrates its gradual contraction, by the transfer of various police circles and villages to the neighbouring districts. Soon after 1850 the greatly increased size attained by the rivers Jamunā and Dāokobā, in consequence of changes in the course of the Brahmaputra

drew attention to the difficulty of exercising proper criminal supervision over those parts of Bogrā district on the eastern bank of these rivers. Mr. Mills, a Judge of the *Sadr Dīwāni Adālat* (the then High Court), was deputed to make a local inquiry in the end of 1853; and by orders of the Government of India in the Home Department of the 12th January 1855, the Jamunā and Dāokobā were made the eastern boundary of the district. In 1861, some alterations were made in the south of the district, and several villages transferred, on the suggestion of the Boundary Commissioner, to Rājshāhi, in order to make the petty river Bhādāyā the boundary in that direction. On the 16th March 1868, the police centre of Lālbāzār was removed to Pānchbībī, in consequence of the unhealthiness of the former village. About the same time, that is, on the 20th March, the police centre of Naokhilā was abandoned for the village of Shariākāndi, because of the difficulty of obtaining water at Naokhilā, owing to the silting up of the Mānash river, on which it was situated. In 1869 there were further modifications made in the southern boundary, particularly towards the south-east, in order to make the Ichhāmati river the boundary between the Rāiganj police division and Pābnā district. The orders directing these changes were made by notification of the 4th October of that year. But Bogrā district suffered its greatest reduction in 1871, when, by a notification of the 12th August, the police division of Govindaganj in the north was transferred to Rangpur, and the police division of Rāiganj in the south to Pābnā. The orders with regard to Govindaganj were not carried out in their entirety, and it was found necessary to re-transfer 160 villages from that police division, 102 of which were attached to Shariākāndi, 9 to Bogrā, and 49 to Sibganj *thānā*. In the *Gazette* of the 11th September 1872, the transfer was also notified of 39 villages from Mymensingh to Bogrā, which were attached to police division Shariākāndi. About two years previously the *thānā* of Sibganj had been, for financial reasons, reduced to an outpost of *thānā* Bogrā. The accession of 58 new villages to the latter was considered to make its area excessive, and Sibganj was re-erected into an independent police division. In 1868 the fiscal jurisdiction was again made the subject of inquiry, in order to bring it into coincidence with the magisterial boundaries, but interchanges took place only between Bogrā and Mymensingh and between Bogrā and Pābnā. The village transfers in this instance were attended with confusion, owing to the circumstance that at the same time a transfer of 275 villages from Mymensingh to Pābnā was being effected. Of these, 90 had been transferred to Bogrā in 1869. In 1874 these villages were removed from the Bogrā list to that of Pābnā. The fundamental cause, which gave rise to so much perplexity, was connected with the fact that "large portions of the district of Bogrā were surveyed with the neighbouring districts of Mymensingh, Dinājpur, and Rājshāhi;

and the survey papers were deposited in the Collectorates of those districts, the reason being that the portions in question consisted of estates which paid their revenue into those Collectorates." The confusion was so great that it was impossible to trust the *mauzāwār*, *mahālwār*, and *dehālbandi* or village and estate registers. An attempt was made in 1875 to ascertain the amount of revenue paid into other treasuries by estates situated in Bogrā; but the Collectors of the surrounding districts were unable to give accurate information, and all declared that it was most difficult, if not impossible, to do so.

In September 1872, 39 villages were transferred from Mymensingh to Bogrā. Interchanges of villages took place between Bogrā and Mymensingh, and between Bogrā and Pābnā up to the year 1880 A.D. By a Government notification of 1896, published in December, almost the whole of the police division of Bādalgāchhi and a small portion of Adamdīghi, *i.e.*, all the villages which were entirely on the west of the Northern Bengal State Railway were transferred to Rājshāhi, so as to place the whole of the *gānjā*-producing tract under the Collector of that district.

Administrative charge and staff. The administration of the district is in charge of the Magistrate-Collector under the Commissioner of the Rājshāhi Division. He is assisted by a staff of four Deputy-Collectors, who have also magisterial powers, and of one or two Sub-Deputy-Collectors. On the judicial side Bogrā is an appurtenance of the district of Pābnā, and the Judge of that place visits Bogrā four times in a year, for the disposal of Sessions cases. Criminal and civil appeals are heard at Pābnā, except when the Judge chooses to take them up at Bogrā during his short visits. Civil suits of the value of Rs. 2,000 and over are tried at Pābnā, there being only two Munsifs at Bogrā. An additional Munsif is occasionally sent to relieve congestion.

Growth of revenue. The total revenue of the district has been shown in the last *Gazetteer* to have been £48,431 in 1853-54 and £60,639 (Rs. 6,06,390) in 1870-71. The revenue of the district gradually rose to Rs. 8,18,404 in 1892-93, to Rs. 8,70,945 in 1901-02, and to Rs. 9,76,947 in 1906-07; thus during the decade ending in 1901-02 there was an increase of Rs. 52,541 and during the next five years a further increase of Rs. 1,06,002. Of the revenue collected in 1906-07 the greater portion (Rs. 4,96,677) was derived from Land Revenue. The other main heads of income were Stamps (Rs. 2,09,167); Excise (Rs. 1,22,562); Cesses (Rs. 1,22,135); and Income tax (Rs. 22,546).

Cesses. The road and public works cesses are, as usual, levied at the maximum rate of one anna in the rupee on the rental. As the result of a general valuation, which took effect from the beginning of 1902-03, the demand was raised from Rs. 1,01,361 to Rs. 1,14,408. The number of tenures assessed to cesses was 10,035. Further additions to the demand amounting to Rs. 1,648 were made in 1904-05 and 1905-06, and the current

demand for 1906-07 was Rs. 1,16,046, which is more than double the cesses realised two decades before.

Income tax. The Income Tax Act (Act II of 1886) came into force on the 1st day of April 1886 on the repeal of the License Tax Act, Act II (B.C.) of 1880. During the year 1885-86, the license tax yielded altogether Rs. 17,160 paid by 845 assessees. But during 1886-87, the income tax yielded Rs. 23,073 paid by 980 assessees. The minimum income assessable was at first Rs. 500, but was raised to Rs. 1,000 in April 1903. The number of assessees and the net collection during 1902-03 was 1,217 and Rs. 31,176 respectively. Owing to Act XI of 1903 raising the taxable minimum to Rs. 1,000, the number of assessees and the amount of tax during 1903-04 fell to 482 and Rs. 22,197 respectively. But since then there has been a steady increase, and in 1906-07 the assessees numbered 507 and the net collection was Rs. 22,546, the incidence of the tax being about 5·06 pies a head.

Stamps. Stamps form an important source of revenue. The people are generally litigious and use stamps in their ordinary business transactions about money and the transfer of property. During the decade ending in 1896-97 the stamp revenue rose from Rs. 97,124 to Rs. 1,58,532; and during the next decade to Rs. 1,81,203. The increase is due chiefly to the growing demand for judicial stamps, which brought in Rs. 1,05,704 during the year 1896-97 against Rs. 67,024 in 1887-88 and Rs. 1,21,903 in 1905-06. The total stamp revenue during 1906-07 came to Rs. 2,09,167. The increase has presumably been caused by the gradual growth of litigation, as the receipts from court-fees and other judicial stamps during 1906-07 alone show an increase of Rs 20,481 over those for the preceding year. The demand for non-judicial stamps during the same periods has not kept pace with that for judicial stamps, the receipts being only Rs. 52,828 in 1896-97 against Rs. 30,100 in 1887-88 and Rs 59,300 in 1905-06. In the year 1906-07 the receipts from the non-judicial stamps came to Rs. 66,783. The gradual increase is presumably due to the increase in the execution in the number of deeds, bonds, leases, etc.

Excise. The excise revenue in the district has been fairly progressive. It rose from Rs 50,773 in 1886-87 to Rs. 1,22,562 in 1906-07, showing an increase of Rs. 71,789 in the course of 21 years.

The principal sources of excise revenue are country spirit, *gānjā*, and opium. The district was till 1908 under the out-still system and country spirit was distilled in licensed out-stills. The revenue from this source rose from Rs. 10,545 in 1886-87 to Rs 23,286 in 1895-96, and again to Rs. 53,916 in 1906 07.

In this district the principal consumers of out-still liquor are the Santāls, chiefly inhabiting *thānā* Pānchbībī, and the up-country immigrants. The Muhammadans who form the bulk of the population do not generally drink spirits.

The revenue derived from *gānjā* rose from Rs. 19,664 in 1886 87 to Rs. 22,152 in 1897-98, but the expansion since then has

been much more rapid, and in 1906-07 the total revenue from *gānjā* was Rs. 47,195. The marked increase in the revenue from this source has been chiefly due to the increased vigilance on the part of the detective staff of the Excise Department, which has checked the smuggling of *gānjā* from the adjoining *gānjā*-producing district of Rājshāhi. Also, since the 23rd May 1905, the rate of duty on the different kinds of *gānjā* has been raised from Rs. 6, Rs. 7-4, Rs. 7-8, and Rs. 9 to Rs. 11, and this has also contributed to the increase in the receipts.

From 1886-87 to 1896-97, the revenue from opium was fairly steady and was nearly Rs. 20,000. In 1897-98 the consumption fell off considerably, resulting in the reduction of the receipts to Rs. 16,202. Since then, both revenue and consumption have been almost steady. There is no reason to suspect that smuggled opium finds its way into the district at present, and the larger issues prior to 1897-98 cannot be accounted for except on the assumption that opium used to be smuggled from Bogrā into other districts where the rate of duty was higher.

The incidence of excise revenue last year per head of population was 2 annas and 3 pies.

Registration.

There are six registration offices in the district, *viz.*, *Sadr*, Akkelpur, Sherpur, Shariākāndi, Sibganj and Birkedār. All these offices are in charge of separate Sub-Registrars. At the district head-quarters, the Sub-Registrar is styled the Special Sub-Registrar and in addition to registering documents supervises the work of the subordinate offices, hears appeals against orders of rural Sub-Registrars, refusing to admit deeds to registration, and helps the District Registrar, who is the Collector of the district, in the administration and control of the department. Previous to the year 1893, the *Sadr* office was the only Registration office in the district, and the number of registrations was then about 10,000 in the year. To meet the growing demands of the people, the sub-registry offices of Sherpur and Khanjanpur (now Akkelpur) were opened in 1893, those of Sibganj and Shariākāndi in 1894, and of Birkedār in 1899. Since the opening of these offices, registration has been gradually increasing and the total number of documents registered last year (1907) was 31,644. The district is still in need of a few more offices.

The department was reorganised in 1905. Before that, the *Sadr* or Special Sub-Registrars were paid partly by fixed salaries and partly by fees, and the rural Sub-Registrars by fees only. But since the reorganisation they are all paid by fixed salaries and the services of the rural Sub-Registrars and their clerks have been made pensionable.

Administration of justice. Civil Justice and Civil Courts.

The judicial staff entertained for the purposes of civil justice consists of two permanent Munsifs stationed at Bogrā. The District Judge of Pābnā is in charge of the administration of civil justice of the district. The Subordinate Judge of Pābnā also exercises the usual powers of a Sub-Judge and of a Small Cause

Court Judge up to Rs. 500, and power to try original cases up to the value of Rs. 2,000. The Munsif of the 2nd court has powers of a Small Cause Court Judge up to Rs. 50 only. The number of regular suits tried by the Munsifs at Bogrā was 2,991 in 1893, and rose to 4,408 in 1902, with fluctuations from year to year. The Small Cause Court cases were, however, on the decline. They were 2,879 in 1893, and fell to 1,707 in 1902. The increase in the number of regular suits has occasioned the location of an additional Munsif from time to time for the last few years.

The number of civil appeals before the District Judge was 104 in 1893, and 152 in 1902. The lowest number of appeals heard by the Judge in any year of the decade was 69 in 1899.

Criminal Justice and Criminal Courts.

Criminal justice is administered by the District and Sessions Judge of Pābnā and Bogrā, the District Magistrate, and Deputy and Sub-Deputy-Magistrates stationed at Bogrā. The sanctioned staff at Bogrā consists in addition to the District Magistrate of three Deputy-Magistrates—two with first class and one with second class powers. There are one or two Sub-Deputy-Magistrates posted at head-quarters.

There are also two Benches of Honorary Magistrates, one at Bogrā and the other at Sherpur. The former is vested with second class powers and is now composed of ten members, and the latter exercises third class powers and is now composed of nine members. One of the members of the Bogrā Bench is authorised to sit singly for the trial of cases. The Bogrā Bench has also power to try summarily, under section 261 of the Criminal Procedure Code, cases under sections 323, 352, 426 and 447, I. P. C. The Bench is not authorised to take cognisance of any offence except on reference by the District Magistrate or the Deputy-Magistrate in charge. The Sherpur Bench is authorised to take up cases arising within the Sherpur Municipality under Act III (B.C.) of 1884 and under bye-laws made under section 34 of Act V of 1861, Act IV (B. C.) of 1873, Act V (B. C.) of 1880 and sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Act XI of 1890. The Bench Magistrates generally try unimportant cases. The largest number of cases disposed of by them was 661 in 1904. In the following two years the number was 536 and 500 respectively, and in 1907 only 297.

Crime has been nearly stationary since 1893. The total number of persons convicted or bound down in 1893 was 961 against 1,139 in 1904 and 1,191 in 1907. There was, however, a drop in 1899, when 792 persons only were convicted or bound down. The largest number of persons convicted or bound down was 1,412 in 1904. The largest number of convictions has been for "offences against public tranquillity" which numbered 110 in 1893 against 159 in 1907, and for "hurt,

criminal force and assault," the convictions for which amounted to 132 in 1893 and 106 in 1907.

In 1905 and 1906 no less than 114 persons were convicted of *dākāiti* or of being members of a gang of *dākāits*. The effect of these convictions has been remarkable, and *dākāities* have practically disappeared from the district. Against 21 *dākāities* in 1905 and 14 in 1906, there were only 3 in 1907.

Looking into the work of the criminal courts for the period, we find that the largest number of cases (2,276) was disposed of in 1893, and that there was a fall in the number of cases from 1894 to 1902, the lowest being 1,409 in 1899, with slight fluctuations from time to time. The number, however, was again on the increase from the year 1903, being 2,193 in that year; 2,185 in 1904; 2,100 in 1905; 2,082 in 1906 and 2,177 in 1907. The files of the Magistrates were not, however, very heavy, and the cases were generally disposed of without unusual delay.

Police Stations.

For police purposes the district is divided into eight police divisions (*thānās*), *viz*:—(1) Bogrā, (2) Sherpur, (3) Dhunot, (4) Shariākāndi, (5) Sibganj, (6) Khetlāl, (7) Pānchbībī, (8) Adamdīghi. Subordinate to *thānās* Bogrā and Adamdīghi there is also an outpost which is located at Dhupchānchiā.

District Police staff.

The force employed consisted in 1907 of the District Superintendent of Police, 2 inspectors, 23 sub-inspectors, 25 head constables, and 170 constables. The total cost of the regular police of Bogrā district during the year amounted to Rs. 6,638 a month or Rs. 79,656 annually. Calculated on the area and population of the district, there was one policeman to every 6·1 square miles and one to every 3866·6 of the population. The annual cost of maintaining the force came to Rs. 58-9-8 per square mile of area, and Re. 0-1-5 per head of the population. There are no municipal police either for the Bogrā or Sherpur towns. The town police is now maintained from the Provincial Revenues.

Rural Police.

Under the Musalmān Government the village watchmen were *pāiks* or foot retainers of *zamīndārs*. In the time of Husain Shāh, these *pāiks* with the assistance of the *Sillaidārs* or yeomanry caused serious disturbances and attempted to obtain independence. They are spoken of as Abyssinians, but it is probable that their leaders only were of that nation. They were finally overcome and expelled from the country. Some are said to have gone as far west as Gujarāt, but the majority went south to Midnāpur where they took service with the Jungle Rājās on the western frontier towards Chota Nāgpur. It is supposed that prior to the commencement of the last century there were no *chaukidārs* or village watch proper in this part of Bengal. By the Bengal Regulation XIII of 1813 the first municipal law was enacted in Bengal to provide for the protection of towns by *chaukidārs* paid by rates levied on the populations. In 1815 Mr. Ewer, Magistrate of Mymensingh, perceiving the applicability

of this principle to country villages established the first village watch, holding the *zamīndārs* responsible for the support of the *chaukidārs* of which it was composed.

This system, it appears, was introduced about 1816 into Rājshāhi and Dinājpur.

In 1866 Mr. McNeile returned the rural police in the district of Bogrā as consisting of 3,023 *chaukidārs* maintained exclusively by payment in cash or kind made by villagers. He also reported that none were in occupation of lands on service-tenures, or were paid in any manner by the *zamīndārs*. In 1872 the village watch or rural police numbered 2,628, maintained either by the *zamīndārs* or by the service-lands held rent-free. The present Chaukidari Act was introduced in this district, as far as can be gathered from the records in the office, in April 1871. The *daffādāri* system was introduced into the district in 1896. Its introduction was at first tentative only, 79 *daffādārs* or head watchmen being appointed to places that were notorious haunts of bad characters or where robbery and thefts were rife. They were called head watchmen. In 1903 the system was, however, extended throughout the district

The rural police now (1906-07) consist of 149 *daffādārs* and 1,593 *chaukidārs*, grouped in 150 unions, the average population per union being 5,697, and per *chaukidār* 537 The *chaukidārs* are mostly up-country men of low caste, such as Dosādhs and Chāmārs. Lately efforts have been made to recruit from the local Musalmān population, and the number of local Musalmāns in the force is daily gaining ground. As a body the *chaukidārs* have hitherto proved of very little use, and recently some of them were found to be accomplices of *dākāits* and other criminals. The *daffadārs* are perhaps more useful, but quite 50 per cent. of them are illiterate and have no social influence in their unions. They are being more carefully recruited now and good work both among *daffādārs* and *chaukidārs* is being encouraged by the payment of liberal rewards.

The working of the police. The working of the police during the quinquennium from 1900 to 1904 was satisfactory, and only two charges of torture and eight of extortion were made against them during that period.

Jail. Buildings. There is a second class jail now at Bogrā with accommodation for 190 prisoners of all classes. It is situated close to the court buildings on the western bank of the river Karatoyā. The main jail building which is a two-storied and brick-built structure with five principal wards, was built with other minor buildings and the enclosing walls in the year 1883. Before that time the jail building was entirely of mud, with accommodation for 100 prisoners only. Long-term prisoners were drafted off to Rājshāhi. The present jail buildings are now undergoing several additions and alterations. The old ward, where *daris* were made, has been walled off and converted into a segregation ward for under-trial prisoners.

A new workshed is being constructed for A class convicts, and the construction of a separate workshed for B class convicts has received administrative sanction. It is intended to enlarge the jail so as to accommodate 270 to 290 prisoners. There are no subsidiary jails attached to the Bogrā jail.

Population. During 1907, 724 prisoners of all classes were received in the jail including convicts 329, under-trial 387, and civil 8. The prisoners are generally employed in oil-pressing, wheat-grinding, *surkee*-pounding, bamboo and cane work, carpet-weaving, cloth-washing and jute twine-making. Convict labour is also supplied to P. W. Department on cash payment.

Expenditure. The gross expenditure of the jail during 1907 was Rs. 23,378 and the total cost per head of average strength was Rs. 136-15-7.

Mortality. The jail is, as a rule, fairly healthy, malarial fever and dysentery being the commonest diseases. The year 1907 was unhealthy, the death-rate per thousand of the daily average population rising to 60 for the year and the daily proportion of sick to 5·13. Of the nine deaths during 1907, two were from remittent fever, one from diarrhœa, and six from dysentery.

Sanitary arrangements. The sanitary arrangements in the jail have been recently improved. All the drains are now *pakkā* and the latrine arrangements are also satisfactory. Drinking water is boiled in a patent boiler and stored in a reservoir whence it is distributed by means of covered cans.

CHAPTER XII.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

Creation of the District Board.

The Bogrā District Board was formed under Bengal Act III of 1885 (The Bengal Local Self-Government Act) which came into force in this district on the 1st April 1887. There are no Local Boards and the elective system is therefore not in force, all the members being appointed by Government.

Sphere of responsibility.

The District Board is responsible for the maintenance of roads, bridges and road-side rest-houses, for the provision of proper water-supply and village sanitation. The educational functions delegated to the District Board include the management of primary and middle schools, the distribution of grants-in-aid of middle schools under private management, the administration of the grant for primary education, the conduct of the annual examination of the lower primary schools and the award of lower primary scholarships. The Board is also authorised to establish and maintain technical schools, with the sanction of Government. It is entrusted with the management of pounds, and of some of the public ferries, the control and administration of public charitable dispensaries or hospitals, and of veterinary work. It has also been empowered to undertake relief measures in case of famine, to establish and maintain staging bungalows and *serais*, to offer rewards for the destruction of various animals, to hold fairs and exhibitions, and to undertake and carry out any other local work likely to promote the health, comfort or convenience of the public.

Income and expenditure.

The statistics for the main items of income and expenditure of the Board up to 1902 are to be found in the B volume. The following tables give the statistics for the decade ending 1906-07:—

Table A.—Average Income for decade ending 1906-07.

Name of District Board.	Provincial rates.	Police Receipts under Cattle Trespass Act.	Education.	Medical.	Civil works in charge of civil officers.		Contribution from Provincial to Local.	Total income excluding opening balance.	Remarks.
					Tolls on Ferries.	Contribution.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	
Bogrā ...	48,212	11,026	3,542	533	1,308	16,240	7,140	1,06,422	

Table B.—Average Expenditure for decade ending 1906-07.

Name of District Board.	Administration including establishment.	Education.	Medical (Hospitals and Dispensaries).	Stationery and Printing.	Civil works—Public works.								Contribution to Provincial.	Total expenditure.	Remarks.
					Buildings.		*Communications.*		Water-supply and water-works.	Other works of improvement.	Establishment and contingencies appertaining to Public Works.	Tools and Plants.			
					Original works.	Repairs.	Original works.	Repairs.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	
Bogrā.	1,555	18,620	4,618	534	3,748	807	27,759	19,750	1,425	717	7,587	219	10,571	1,13,890	

When the District Board was formed in 1887, it inherited from its predecessor—the District Road Committee—the work and revenue of that body, the principal source of income being the Road Cess. At the same time, to enable it to meet the new duties, which were imposed upon it principally in connection with education, the entire receipts under the Cattle Trespass Act and the income from certain ferries, were transferred to it from the provincial account, the excess of income over expenditure being made good by a fixed grant from Government. It was believed that the revenue from pounds and ferries was susceptible of considerable improvement, and that from the expansion of the income under those heads the Board would be able to provide for the medical needs of the district and for other local requirements. These anticipations have only partially been fulfilled, and while the gain from ferries has been substantial, the increase under pounds has been trifling. The Road Cess, it is true, has shown a steady expansion, but this amount is not sufficient to meet the growing demand for improved communications, especially for feeder roads; and the resources of the Board have been recently augmented by an annual grant from provincial revenues equal to one-fourth of its receipts from Road Cess. This new and growing

source of income will enable the Board to make adequate provision for its various needs, not only in respect of roads and bridges, but also in other directions.

In 1906-07 the Board had an opening balance of Rs. 40,717. Its total income from all sources was Rs. 1,79,349. The income from the Local Rate (Road Cess) was Rs. 54,677. Therefore the incidence of taxation and the incidence of income (excluding balance) per head of population were 1 anna, and 3 annas, and 4 pies respectively.

Important dapartments of the District Board. Public works.

The management of "Public Works" is the most important function of the District Board. The immediate administration of the roads, etc., is vested in the District Engineer and his subordinates. Since 1906-07 the civil buildings are no longer in the charge of the District Board, but are looked after by the P. W. Department.

For 1906-07, the allotment for Public Works was Rs. 95,173 for original works, and Rs. 22,250 for repairs, but Rs. 19,000 of this allotment were not spent.

Roads.

The District Board maintains altogether one mile of metalled and 377 miles of unmetalled district roads, besides 105 miles of village roads. The cost of maintenance per mile in 1906-07 was Rs. 356 for metalled and Rs. 9 for unmetalled respectively.

Education.

In addition to the Government grant of Rs. 6,000, the average expenditure of the Board on education during the last decade was Rs. 18,000; the percentage on ordinary income of expenditure on education was thus 25·18.

The District Board maintains 8 Middle schools and aids 23 Middle, 57 Upper Primary, 281 Lower Primary and ten other schools.

Medical.

The average expenditure of the Board on medical charity is Rs. 4,600 or 5 per cent. of its ordinary income. There were two dispensaries under the control of Government when the Local Self-Government Act was introduced in this district. In 1888 the Board opened three dispensaries, one at Jaipur Hat, one at Dhupchānchiā, and the other at Burīganj. Since then three more dispensaries have been opened, one at Dhunot, one at Khetlāl, and the third at Kānchanpur.

Pounds and ferries.

There are 79 pounds in this district. All of them are managed by the District Board, which farms them out deriving thereby an average annual income of Rs. 11,000. There are 23 ferries, of which 17 are managed by Government and 6 by the District Board. The ferries under Government control yield an annual income of Rs. 20,300, while those under the District Board yield an annual income of Rs. 2,000. To assist in the management and keep a check over the work of the lessees and farmers, an Inspector of pounds and ferries is entertained.

Administration of the Board.

The District Board consists of 16 members, all of whom are nominated, while 5 are *ex-officio* members. Out of these, in 1906-07, 6 were officials and 10 non-officials.

The average number of meetings held during a year during the last decade was 17, and the average attendance of members at each meeting works out to 8·7, which is not very satisfactory. During 1906-07, 16 meetings were held, one of which proved abortive. The average attendance at each meeting for officials was 3·33, and for non-officials 4·93, giving a total of 8·26. The degree of interest shown in their public duties by non-official members is perhaps increasing. But the discussions at the meetings are not very often keen, and do not evoke much display of local knowledge or show an intelligent grasp of the needs of the district. Much of the work of the Board is done by the Chairman.

Municipalities. Their constitution.

There are two municipalities at Bogrā, one at the headquarters station of Bogrā, and the other at Sherpur, 13 miles away. They were constituted in 1876 under Bengal Act V of 1876. Since the passing of Bengal Act III of 1884 (The Bengal Municipal Act), the elective system has been introduced in both of them, and two-thirds of the commissioners are now elected by the rate-payers. The Bogrā Municipality has an area of 1·25 square miles, with a population of 7,094 persons of whom 31·1 per cent. are rate-payers; and Sherpur Municipality has an area of 2 square miles and its rate-payers number 1,144, which is 27·8 per cent. of the total population. Including both the elected and the nominated members, Bogrā Municipal Board consists of 15 members and the Sherpur Board of 12 members.

Powers and duties

Both the municipalities have all the powers given by the Act. Chapter IX is in force in both of them.

Income.

In both Bogrā and Sherpur, a tax on persons according to circumstances and property is levied; the rates being annas 12 for every hundred rupees of the monthly income of rate-payers in Bogrā, and ½ a pice per rupee of income in Sherpur. The Government buildings are assessed at 7½ per cent. on their annual value. Both municipalities derive also a considerable income from tolls and from taxes on animals and vehicles, and levy special rates to meet the cost of conservancy. In 1907-08 the income of Bogrā town from taxation amounted to Rs. 21,232 and that of Sherpur to Rs. 6,324, while the total receipts from all sources excluding loans came to Rs. 31,564 and Rs. 7,843 respectively. The incidence of taxation per head of population was Rs. 2-15-10 in Bogrā and Re. 1-8-7 in Sherpur.

The financial condition of the Bogrā Municipality has greatly improved within recent years, but that of the Sherpur Municipality has remained almost stationary. The reason is not far to seek. The revision of the municipal taxation, which is generally left to the municipal employés in small municipalities, is not done with a sense of much responsibility. In Bogrā the taxes were revised by a paid Assessor in March 1906. The result of the revision was an increase of about Rs. 5,000 annually. In the Resolution on the Report of the working of the municipalities in

Eastern Bengal and Assam during the year 1906-07, it was observed that the result obtained in Bogrā "is a significant object-lesson in the value of employing outside agency for assessment revisions." The financial condition of the Sherpur Municipality is bad and consequently the most urgent improvements cannot be undertaken for want of funds. There the taxes and rates are in need of a systematic revision, and unless this is done, there is no hope of any future progress in the administration of the municipality.

Expenditure.

For the ten years ending in 1901-02 the average expenditure of the two municipalities was Rs. 13,924 and Rs. 6,402 respectively. For 1907-08 Bogrā spent Rs. 29,722 and Sherpur Rs. 10,779. The Bogrā Municipality has made good use of its enlarged resources, and during the last two years, thanks chiefly to the energy and zeal of the Chairman, Babu Rajani Kānta Mazumdār, great improvements have been made in all the important departments of municipal administration. A quinquennial programme for the systematic improvement of the roads has been drawn up, and already during these two years, most of the principal roads have been carefully repaired. The average expenditure on roads for five years previous to 1905-06 was Rs. 930, whereas the average for the next three years was Rs. 2,840. But the heaviest expenditure is on conservancy, which, in 1907-08, cost no less than Rs. 12,254; about half as much again as the special rate brings in. The drains of the town have been improved and the lighting of the town also shows great improvement. Half recumbent wooden posts bearing small lamps at their tops have been replaced by larger lamps on *pakka* masonry pillars. At all important centres double lights have been provided.

The new sweepers' quarters built at one extremity of the town might well be imitated by other municipalities.

The building of the municipal school for boys has been thoroughly repaired and an entirely new building is being constructed for the municipal girls' school.

Water-supply has also been carefully looked after and two new wells of a standard plan have been constructed during the last two years. Lastly, the principal markets and *hāts* of the town, though the property of private *zamīndārs*, are being improved under municipal management. The thatched sheds of the markets are being replaced by sheds with corrugated iron roofs, the sites are being raised and properly drained, and wide metalled paths are being laid down between the lines of stalls.

Attendance of Municipal Commissioners and interest taken by them.

On the whole, the attendance of the commissioners in both municipalities has been irregular with a few exceptions, and they have not as a body evinced much interest in their public duties. The present Chairman of Bogrā Municipality, Babu Rajani Kānta Mazumdār, is however a notable exception.

CHAPTER XIII.

EDUCATION.

Literacy of the people.

At the last census, out of every thousand males only 96 on an average, and of every thousand females only 3, were shown as able to read and write. The provincial figures were 104 for males and 5 for females, while the average for the Rājshāhi Division was 84 males and 3 females. Among the Hindus 12 per cent. of the males and a little less than 1 per cent. of the females were returned as literate, *i.e.*, able to read and write, and the corresponding figures for the Muhammadan population were—males 9 per cent., females 1 per mille; 1,171 males and 15 females amongst Hindus, and 485 males and 5 females amongst Musalmāns were returned as able to read and write English.

Progress of education.

Taking the figures for the last three censuses, we find that in 1881 of every thousand males 71 were literate, and ten years later the number had risen to 76. Among women 5 out of every thousand were returned as literate in 1881, and in 1891 only one in every thousand. It is difficult to believe that there was a real falling off in female education during the decade, and there was probably some mistake in the earlier enumeration.

In the 15 years between 1891 and 1907 the estimated proportion of boys of a school-going age actually at school increased from 198 to 282 per thousand; and that of girls from 6 to 11.

Within the last twenty years (1887—1907) the number of schools of all classes has increased from 308 to 441, and the number of pupils from 9,491 to 18,322. The number of aided and Government schools, English and Vernacular, was only 11 in 1856-57, it increased to 29 in 1870-71, and to 106 in 1873-74, and the total number of pupils from 503 to 1,221, and 3,428 during the same periods. In 1875, there were 110 aided and Government schools, attended by 3,303 pupils.

Secondary education. High English schools.

There are no colleges in the district.

The number of High English schools, *i.e.*, schools preparing students for the Calcutta University, rose from one in 1886-87 to three in 1906-07. The number of scholars attending them increased from 216 to 725. Of these three schools, one is maintained by Government. It was founded in 1853. Of the remaining two, one is at Sherpur and the other at Naokhilā. The former is aided by Government, and the latter is maintained by the Rājā of Dighāpatiyā. The Government Zilā school and the Sherpur school are housed in suitable buildings, having compounds for

the play ground of boys : but the Naokhilā school building is a thatched house and needs improvement.

During 1907-08 there were 363 boys on the roll of the Government Zilā school, of whom 217 were Hindus, 145 Muhammadans, and 1 a Brāhmo. In 1907, 13 boys passed the Entrance examination from the school, and 17 were successful in 1908. There are altogether 15 teachers in the school, of whom 3 are graduates.

Middle English schools.

The number of Middle English schools, *i.e.*, schools teaching up to the standard of the Middle scholarship examination, in which English forms part of the recognised course of study, increased from 8 in 1886-87 to 23 in 1906-07. The number of pupils attending them rose from 598 to 2,162. One of these schools in Bogrā town is managed by the Bogrā Municipality, and two Middle schools at Dupchānchiā and Adamdīghi are maintained by the District Board. Of the remaining 20 schools, 17 are aided by the District Board, and 3 are unaided.

Middle Vernacular schools.

The third class of secondary schools consists of the Middle Vernacular schools, which teach up to the Middle scholarship, but in which English is not taught. There were 18 Middle Vernacular schools in 1886-87, 21 in 1901-02 and 12 in 1906-07. Here, as elsewhere, the popularity of these schools appears to be on the wane, owing to parents demanding an English education for their children ; and the tendency is to transform the Middle Vernacular into Middle English schools. Of the 12 schools in existence, 6 are managed by the District Board and the rest are aided by it. The change in the status of this class of schools has occurred mainly in the aided institutions. Two schools under the management of the District Board were converted into Middle English during the last six years.

Primary Education.

Before 1872, Primary education in this district was in a backward condition. In order to carry out the Government Resolution issued in that year, a Deputy-Magistrate was specially appointed to inquire into the most suitable sites for some sixty new schools which were to be established. A list was drawn out, which was sanctioned by the Magistrate, and notices were issued to the people of the selected villages directing them to send up resident candidates for the appointments of teachers or *gurūs*. Those sent up were examined, and if qualified, appointed. The Inspector in 1872-73, reported: "The number of Primary schools in the district is at present sixty-five. It was only six before the orders of September were carried out. There are 1,429 Muhammadans and 688 Hindus attending these *pāthshālās*. The average roll number is 32·07." 'Only 226 pupils,' says the Deputy-Inspector, 'belong to the middle, and all the rest to the lower classes of society, being for the most part children of cultivators and small *rāiyats*.'

In 1872-73 there were 2,117 children receiving instruction in 65 Primary schools, but in the decade ending in 1892-93 the

number of these schools increased to 314 and the number of pupils to 9,303. On the 31st March 1907, there were 383 Primary institutions in the district, at which 14,100 pupils were under instruction. Of these scholars 2,223 were Hindus, 11,874 were Muhammadans and 3 were children of aboriginal descent.

There are two classes of Primary schools, *viz.*, Upper Primary and Lower Primary. In 1887 there were 41 Upper Primary and 240 Lower Primary schools, and the number of pupils in them were 1,611 and 6,234 respectively. On the 31st March 1907 the number of Upper Primary schools was 64 with 3,574 pupils and that of Lower Primary schools to 319 with 10,526 pupils.

The *pāthshālās* are generally started as venture schools, often by men possessed of but small qualifications for teaching. They are supported by fees and by grants from public funds (mainly local). Since 1903, the District Board grants have been distributed upon a new system, which takes the form of a very small fixed grant during nine months of the year, supplemented by a further residual allowance at the close of the year as funds permit and as the condition of the school justifies. It is impossible to calculate the average emoluments, from fees and from grants, which the village *gurū* enjoys. The grant from public funds varies from Re. 1 to Rs. 8 a month. Thus supported the school is generally held in some out-house belonging to the village headman or in an inferior building of its own.

Recent improvements.

Just at the close of the year 1905-06, Government placed at the disposal of the Board a sum of Rs. 8,800 out of the Imperial grant, to provide some of the schools with good houses and with furniture. In the following year 19 houses were constructed, 5 for Middle schools and 14 for Primary schools at a total cost of Rs. 12,440, the balance being contributed by the local people. These houses have also been equipped with furniture and appliances. Besides the improvements to school buildings from the above sources, the secretaries of the aided schools at Sonāmukhi, Sāntāhār, and Shariākāndi have erected new buildings for their schools according to the type-plan by funds raised by them, with some financial aid from the District Board.

Curricula for schools.

The curricula sanctioned by the Government of Bengal in its Resolution No. 1 dated the 1st January 1901 have been adopted in all the schools. The course, however, is not very popular owing to its extremely scientific character, which renders it somewhat incomprehensible even to the great mass of village teachers. Steps are being taken to revise the curricula and make them more appropriate alike for the boys and the teachers.

Results and method of examinations.

The so-called "Primary examination" is held at the conclusion of the Middle standard of instruction, and is conducted privately by the teachers of the schools. In pursuance of the new educational policy of Government, all public examinations of standards lower than the Matriculation or Entrance examination of

the University (except those for scholarships), have been abolished; and the award of leaving certificates lies wholly with the teachers. Under the system of scholarship examinations now in vogue, the total sum available for Upper Primary scholarships is divided in fixed proportions among all the educational subdivisions of the district, and similarly the sum available for Lower Primary scholarships is divided amongst all the *thānās* also in fixed proportions. This guards against the advanced portions of the district carrying away all the scholarships. Preliminary examinations at centres are held by Deputy-Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors of schools with a view to selecting candidates who are eligible to compete for these scholarships. The maximum number of candidates who can thus be selected is limited to three or four times the number of scholarships available. The Inspector of schools awards the Middle and Upper Primary scholarships, and the District Board awards the Lower Primary scholarships. It is said that this system has not yet succeeded in gaining the confidence of the public.

The Entrance scholarships are awarded by the University. The standard of education and the system of examination for the Entrance course of the Calcutta University have recently undergone drastic and comprehensive changes.

Physical and moral training.

The popular forms of exercise in which the students of High schools take part are football, cricket, lawn-tennis, etc. The boys of Middle and Primary schools indulge mostly in country games, but football is gaining popularity even in rural and suburban schools. There is a gymnastic teacher attached to the Government school and the boys are reported to be taking increasing interest in all forms of physical training. There is also a cricket and football club of the Zilā school. The introduction of drill in Secondary and Primary schools has proved highly beneficial, not only as an useful form of exercise, but as a training in discipline.

Teaching staff.

In the three High schools, the higher teachers are generally men with the required University degrees. But unfortunately, except in the Government school, the teachers are lacking in experience and are changed about so often that they hardly take sufficient interest in their work.

In the Middle schools the tendency is for secretaries to appoint teachers with the minimum of qualification permissible under the departmental rules. But a greater source of danger lies in the constant changes which take place in the staff of the schools, and the very irregular manner in which they receive their pay. Poor as the scale of the pay of the village teacher is, there would be less discontent and perhaps more zeal shown in the discharge of his duties, if he were allowed to draw his pay regularly every month.

The above remarks are equally true with regard to Primary schools.

Fortunately, however, along with the general awakening of the district in all educational matters, the necessity for employing properly qualified teachers and paying them an adequate remuneration is receiving more general recognition, and Government has recently opened in Bogrā town a school for training *gurus*.

Supervising agency.

The supervising agency consists of one Deputy-Inspector of schools, three Sub-Inspectors of schools and one Assistant Sub-Inspector of schools. At present the whole inspecting staff is paid from provincial funds and is under the control of the Education Department.

Female education.

Female education is still very backward in the district; and the rate of progress till quite recently has been comparatively slow; but this is not surprising having regard to the fact that the bulk of the population of the district is Muhammadan and that their women are even more strictly secluded than those of the Hindus of the same rank. During the last two years however special attention was given to this branch of education and the result has been most satisfactory. In 1872-73 there were 72 girls receiving instruction and only three schools had been opened. In 1906-07 the number of schools were 33 and the number of girls attending 684. During 1907 the scale of the aid to girls' schools was increased and special efforts were made to enlist the sympathy of the *mandals* and other leading men of villages, in the cause of the education of their girls. They responded with alacrity, and in many instances girls' schools were opened without any preliminary aid from the Board. In one instance, that of the Baiguni girls' school, the wife of a rich Muhammadan *jotdār*, herself an educated lady, has been teaching in the school opened by her husband. The Deputy-Inspector of schools reports that this year (1908), the number of girls' schools has risen to 107, and the number of pupils under instruction is now 2,123. The girls are almost all Muhammadan. These results are most hopeful.

Technical school.

An Industrial school at head-quarters was opened on the 1st January 1908. There are already 39 boys, most of whom are in the carpentry class, and some in the weaving section. There was some difficulty in getting a trained weaver from Serampur to take charge of the weaving class. A blacksmith's class is also about to be opened. The public took a great deal of interest in the establishment of this school, and the handsome sum of Rs. 12,000, part of the money subscribed on the occasion of the coronation of His Majesty, was set apart for the initial expenses of the institution. Thirty-four scholarships have been sanctioned, 30 by Government and 4 by private persons. The Government has also sanctioned a recurrent expenditure of Rs. 4,500 in round figures, of which Rs. 600 annually will be contributed by the Board. An energetic Superintendent has been appointed.

Muhammadan education.

Muhammadan education is gaining ground every year. The total number of Muhammadans under instruction has increased during the last five years from 13,957 to 15,554 or by 11·4

per cent. The percentage of Muhammadans to the total number of pupils in all classes of schools in 1906-07 was 79·58, of whom 11·54 were in secondary schools, 64·81 in Primary schools and 3·23 in special schools. The percentage of Muhammadans under instruction to the Muhammadan population of school-going age was 14·8. Ten years before it was 12·4.

Schools for the study of Oriental and Classical Languages.

In 1906-07 there were three Sanskrit *tols* with 33 pupils. Two schools sent up pupils for the Departmental. Title examinations and were successful. There were also 34 *maktabs* with 1,003 pupils, teaching a little Arabic and Persian and the Korān. A new class of *Madrasā*, known as Middle *Madrasā*, is being started at Bogrā. It is virtually a Middle English school with the addition of Urdu in standards I to VI and Persian in standard VI.

Expenditure.

The total expenditure on public instruction for the district amounted to Rs. 85,496 in 1907-08. From the table given in the Statistical Account it appears that the total expenditure in 1870-71 amounted to £1,367 (Rs. 13,670) and to £1,912 (Rs. 19,120) in 1873.

CHAPTER XIV.

GAZETTEER.

Badal.—On the border of this district, but now in Dinājpur, is the village of Bādal, where the Company formerly had a factory, and near which the famous Bādal pillar was found.

Belamla.—In the Pānchbībī police division, in 25° 8′ N. latitude, and 89° 5′ E. longitude, contains the remains of an old town, where during a large part of last century lived Rājib Lochan Mandal, whose wealth is said to have been as great as that of Jagat Seth of Murshidābād. He owed his affluence it is said to his piety and obedience to his spiritual guide (*gurū*), who one day, in order to test his patience and submission, commenced to beat him. At the seventh blow Rājib refused to endure further; but for submitting to so many, was granted one lakh of rupees for every blow given. At the same time he was told that had he endured more, his reward would have been proportionately greater. The ruins of 12 temples of Siva, with fine terra-cotta work on the walls, stand in the jungles close to the ruins of the residence of the Belāmlā *zamīndārs*.

The *zamīndārs* of Belāmlā are reported to have connected the Jumunā and Tulshīgangā by an artificial channel.

Bhawanipur.—An important place of Hindu pilgrimage in the Sherpur *thānā*. It is one of the *Pīthasthāns* where one of the limbs of the goddess Bhawāni is supposed to have fallen when her body was cut up by Vishnu. The original seat of the goddess was at Gulfa or Gulta, a few miles to the south-west of Bhawānipur in the district of Pābnā, but was removed later on to Bhawānipur. The *chota taraf*, the younger branch of family of the Nātor Rājās, now maintains the worship of the goddess.

Bogra.—The chief town and administrative head-quarters of the district, is situated on the west bank of the Karatoyā river in 24° 51′ N. latitude and 89° 26′ E. longitude. The town was declared the head-quarters station of the district at the time of the establishment of the Joint-Magistracy in 1821. In May 1852 its population was estimated at 4,434 souls. In 1869 it was shown as 4,642. In 1872 it was 3,343 males and 2,529 females, total 7,094. The municipality of Bogrā was created in the year 1876. In 1906-07 its income was Rs. 26,794. There are 4½ miles of metalled roads in the town and 8 miles are unmetalled. Most of the roadside drains are still *kachchā* open surface drains, though

some of the drains of the roads through the *bāzār* have been recently made *pakkā*. Of the public buildings in the town, the Collector's residence, which was built on a site acquired in the year 1891 for Rs. 1,500 is a comfortable building. The jail, the circuit house, the Government school, the court offices are all fairly large buildings. A valuable and much needed addition to the Government school has been effected by the acquisition by Government of the handsome Thompson Hall, orginally erected as a memorial to the late Lieutenant-Governor Sir Rivers Thompson, by the Munshi Babus of Sherpur.

A handsome theatre hall situated in the centre of a fairly large and well laid out park is now the most attractive feature of the town. The park and the hall are both the outcome of funds subscribed by the public on the occasion of the coronation of the King-Emperor. Amongst public institutions may be mentioned the Charitable Dispensary close to the Collector's residence, now managed by a dispensary committee. A new building has been recently erected for the Lady Dufferin's Hospital for females, known as the Tahirunnessā Dispensary, in memory of the lady whose husband, the present Nawāb of Bogrā, has endowed it with property yielding an income of nearly Rs. 1,200, from the proceeds of which the institution is entirely maintained. There is also a combined public library and club. The library contains many valuable books. The club building is also a gift of the Nawāb. Besides the Coronation Park, the Nawāb has also presented the town with another large open space of ground, known as the Altafunnessā Park. This, with the adjacent circuit house compound, affords the boys of the town a suitable playground. The Government cemetery is close to the jail garden and contains ten graves.

Among private buildings the most conspicuous is the residence of the Nawāb of Bogrā, a fine brick-built house opposite to the circuit house. The house of Babu Haridhan Dutta, the richest local merchant, is also a fairly handsome building situated on the bank of the Karatoyā.

There are two markets in the town belonging to the Silbarsā and the Kāthāil *zamīndārs*, and a large *hāt* at Kālitolā held on Thursdays and Sundays. There is a railway station named after the town on the Brahmaputra-Sāntābār (Sultānpur) Branch Railway. The opening of this railway has, as already noted, made Bogrā one of the most accessible stations of the division.

There is nothing of antiquarian interest in the town. The largest mosque dates from 1857. In front of the circuit house is the tank which is said to have been excavated about 1821 entirely by Brāhmans under the direction of the Collectorate Nāzir, Pīr Khān, a daring and unscrupulous man, who seems to have ruled the district for some years. He also made seven miles of the Dinājpur road by forced labour. His oppressions were at last stopped by Government on his attempting to carry off the wife of the *zamīndār* of Silbarsā.

Among the *zamīndārs* of the town may be mentioned :—

(1) Nawāb Saiad Abdus Sobhān Chaudhuri, who comes of a noble Saiad family, a branch of the one to which the Nawābs of Shaistābād belong. Their ancestor came to Bengal as the spiritual guide of Prince Salim, afterwards emperor Jahāngir, when he came to Dacca. The chaudhuri's eminent services to the public were recognised by the Government, and in 1893 the title of Nawāb was conferred upon him as a personal distinction.

(2) Saiad Altāf Ali Chaudhuri is a scion of the family of Saiad Ahmed with whom *parganā* Silbarsā was originally settled by a *farmān* granted by emperor Aurangzeb about 1668 A.D.

(3) Hafizur Rahman Chaudhuri comes of an ancient Muhammadan family of *parganā* Silbarsā.

(4) Shāh Nājam-ud-din Abul Husain is a descendant of an ancient Muhammadan family of Salar in Murshidābād.

Champapur.—An important village in the Adamdīghi *thānā*, four miles to the west of the Tālorā railway station. After Sherpur, Chāmpāpur contains the largest number of residents of the *bhadralok* classes. The village Jhākar, which was the original home of the Muktāgāchā *zamīndārs* of Mymensingh, and Koraibāri, the home of the Gauripur *zamīndārs* of that district, are close to Chāmpāpur. Numerous old tanks and the ruins of old buildings are to be found near these two villages. A new dispensary has been started at Chāmpāpur and the opening of a high school is under contemplation.

Chandnia or Chandmua—Is the name of a large village about five miles north of Mahāsthān, situated in 25° 1′ N. latitude, and 89° 23′ E. longitude, which was three hundred years ago the largest commercial centre in this part of Bengal. Its ancient name is said to have been Chāmpānagar, and it is now sometimes called Chāndmāyā. It has been identified as the town marked on Van den Broucke's map, in 1660, as Tessendia. There are two marshes, called Gori and Sonrāi, one on either side of the village, which are said to mark the site of two great rivers. In the middle of the latter is a raised piece of ground, approached by a brick causeway, covered with bricks, which has now nearly disappeared. It is called the house of Padmādevi, a serpent goddess, whose worship seems in some way to have been confounded with that of the river goddess of the Karatoyā. Chāndniā is said to owe its name to having been the residence of one Chānd Saudāgar, a great merchant, who is described in the popular tradition as trading to every land, a thousand years ago. In his pride he refused to worship Padmā, who, to revenge herself, sunk his ships laden with merchandise, and on the night six of his sons were married, bit and poisoned

them all. Not satisfied with this, she waited till the youngest and last son, Lakhindar, was married, and then slew him also. The legend then tells how his widow, Behulā Sundari, the daughter of a merchant of Ujjain, set out on a raft with the body of her dead husband, trusting to the sacred river to bring her to some place where the gods would have pity on her and restore her husband. One day, as she was travelling, she saw Nyāto *Dhopānī*, who seems to have been the washerwoman of the divinities, on the banks of the river. Her she supplicated, and on her intercession Lakhindar and his brothers were restored to life. The story ends with a description of the happy way in which Chānd Saudāgar lived for the remainder of his days.

Hilli.—An important and growing centre of industry, on the northern section of E. B. S. Railway. It was originally a market town on the Jamunā, but has grown into importance since the opening of the railway line. Babu Kumud Bihāri Shāhā is the principal *zamīndār* of the place. The town is situated on the extreme north-western corner of the district, and the road to the new subdivision Balurghāt in Dinājpur passes through the town.

Jaipur or Jaipur Hat.—Also an important centre of trade and a railway station of the E. B. S. Railway. One of the biggest *hāts* in this district belonging to the Dimlā Rājā is held here. There is a District Board Charitable Dispensary at Jaipur Hat.

Khanjanpur.—Head-quarters of the Jaipur Government estate, where the office of the Manager is located. There are an inspection bungalow and a charitable dispensary at Khanjanpur.

Khetlal.—A large village and police station situated on the high road leading to Dinājpur. It was visited by Buchanan-Hamilton and also by Cunningham and is a place of some antiquarian interest. Near the ruins of an old brick temple, three pieces of sculpture were found by Cunningham. One of these is a figure of Vishnu and the second, a recumbent female figure, with a short inscription. Near another tank is a ruined *lingam*, a ruined temple and the traces of other ruins. Here there are four principal figures, all of which have been described by Westmacott. One of these is a group of Hara Gauri, another is a four-armed figure of Vishnu, while the third is one of Buddha with an inscription of Buddhistic creed on a broken pedestal.

Madla.—An important village about four miles from Bogrā. Has a Middle English school, which is maintained by the Sarkār *zamindārs*. Babu Krishnendra Nāth Sarkār is the head of the family and is one of the most public spirited *zamīndārs* of the district.

Previous accounts.

Mahasthan.—The important and interesting ruins at Mahāsthān have been described by Buchanan-Hamilton in Volume 2, Martin's East India; and since his time by Messrs. O'Donnell, Beveridge, Westmacott in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and lastly by Sir A. Cunningham in the Archaeological

Survey of India, Volume XV. Since Cunningham's time no one seems to have explored the place, though Mr. Batavyal, who was Collector of the district in 1897, visited it several times, and left interesting notes about its antiquities to which reference has already been made. In the year 1907 a careful survey of the fort was made by Mr. Nandi, the District Engineer. He dug up most of the mounds, which appeared likely to entomb interesting historical relics. As the result of these researches, it is now quite clear that the chief interest in the antiquities of Mahāsthān is Buddhistic, and it is thus most probable that the stupendous ruins which are now known as the Mahāsthān Garh, are the relics of the identical town of Paundravardhana, which was visited by the Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsiang, in the 7th century B.C. Mahāsthān is thus one of the most ancient places in this part of Bengal.

Origin of name.

The name 'Mahāsthān' literally means "the great place," though according to some the word is a corruption of *mahā-nān* or the great bathing place. According to others it is a corruption of Mahā-āsthān, the great place of Muhammadan pilgrimage.*

General view.

The ruins consist of an oblong mound of about 15 feet in general elevation above the country, with earthen ramparts rising from 35 feet to 50 feet at the corner bastions. Remains of masonry work and heaps of bricks point to the existence of watch-towers or other buildings at these corners. It is 4,500 feet in length from north to south by 3,000 feet in breadth. The ramparts are covered with jungle in places, but most of the level spaces inside, which are not too full of bricks and debris, have been brought under cultivation. It was originally surrounded by a broad ditch on the north, south and west sides, and was protected by the Karatoyā on the east. These artificial ditches no doubt served the purpose of moats for the fort. Portions of the embankments on the Gilātolā *khāl*, are bricklined, and present the appearance of sluices which probably regulated the flow of water from the Kālidaha to the inner moats, flanking the inner line of ramparts of the fortress. The ditch to the south is known as the Bārānasi *khāl*; the one to the west as the Gilātolā *khāl*; on the north, the ditch is an offshoot of the extensive lake known as the Kālidaha Sāgar. It is almost certain that the artificial mound on which the fortress was built must have been raised by the earth which was thrown up in the course of the extensive excavations all round the fortress. Villages surrounding the fortress have characteristic Hindu and Buddhist names, *e.g.*, Ghāgarduār to the north, Mathurā and Vasu Bihār on the west, and Gokul and Palāsbāri on the south.

Entrances and roads.

The *garh* has four entrances on the east side:—(1) A flight of stairs on the south-east corner, which appear to have been

* Beveridge, Journal of the Asiatic Society, 1871, No. I, page 92.

built at a comparatively later date by the Muhammadans. (2) Dorāb Shāh gate, an opening which leads by a brick-paved road to Shāh Sultān's grave and a mound called Khodār Pāthar. The road was paved with bricks and like the other roads in the fortress, leads upwards. (3) Sila Devi's *ghāt*, another entrance to the fort which also leads outwards, in an easterly direction, to the river bank. Thousands of pilgrims flock to this place on the occasion of the Paus-Nārāyani Joga and bathe in the stream. Nowadays the bank of the river opposite this entrance is popularly called Sila Devi's *ghāt*. Only the portion of the road inside the fortress is paved with bricks. (4) There is a fourth opening in the wall which has got no special name and this road also is not paved.

On the north side the wall has two openings. One of these is called Sanātan Sāheb's *Gali*, which leads to Govinda's Dwipa and Pātharghāttā outside the fortress.

On the west side there are two gates:—(1) Tāmra Darwājā (copper gate): Cunningham thinks that this gate was called Tāmra Darwājā because of the reddish colour of the soil near the gate. But this appears unlikely. It is much more probable that the doors of the gate were really covered with copper plates. (2) Another gate south of Tāmra Darwājā which leads to Sabhābāti.

There are two roads inside the fortress, one connects Dorāb Shāh's entrance and Shāh Sultān's grave with the gate on the western wall, which goes past Sabhābāti through Mathurā and extends to the village Vasu Bihār, four miles west of Mahāsthān. The second road connects Parasurām's house with Tāmra Darwājā, and runs nearly parallel to the north wall of the fortress. There is a cross-road running parallel to the west wall connecting the two main roads.

Shāh Sultān's *Dargāh*.

Commencing from the south-east corner we come to Shāh Sultān's *Dargāh* which is reached by the flight of stone stairs, noticed before. On reaching the top step, one finds a grave surrounded by low brick walls on all sides. This grave is said to have been of Harapāl, the Rājā's sweeper, who according to tradition betrayed that prince to the Musalmān invaders. On the left side there are numerous tombs. Most of these tombs are of the Muhammadan *zamīndārs* of Silbarsā who are reported to have lived in Mahāsthān for some time. There are smaller tombs of the priests and *Mollās* who looked after the mosques. On the same side (south) there is a small mosque covered with a low dome. It has a stone tablet fixed over the entrance with an inscription in Persian, describing the beauty of the mosque. In this inscription the date of the construction of the mosque is given to be 1130 Hizri (1712 A.D.) in the reign of the emperor Farukh. Siyar. It is curious that Mr. Beveridge and other visitors did not notice the inscription. To the right of the path in the north we come to the *āsthāna* of Shāh Sultān Mahiswār.

On the stone door jambs of the entrance to the grave-yard are written in Bengali the words—

Sri Nar Sinha Dāsasya.

It is strange that Cunningham should have made the mistake of thinking that the characters are "mediaeva Nāgri". His rendering of the words as "of Sri Narashingha's laves" is also an apparent mistake, for the words really give the name of the engraver, who was one Narashingha Dās. "Dās" is generally a generic name of Sūdras as opposed to "Deb," the generic name of Brāhmans. Under what circumstances Narashingha Dās happened to engrave his name here is not known. Probably he might have been one of the master-masons employed either to construct or repair the *Dargāh*. It has also been suggested that the stone door jambs might have been removed from the ruins of an old Hindu temple. But it is doubtful if the inscription is of a date earlier than the 17th century. The tomb itself is a large sized whitewashed mound situated in the centre of the yard with no dome over it. Near the quadrangle there is a whitewashed rectangular masonry platform on which Shāh Sultān is said to have offered his first prayer after having obtained the permission of Parasurām to occupy that small plot of land. Near the entrance to the *Dargāh* one finds a stone *gauripāt* without the *lingam* but with the usual spout or drain. It is circular in form and has a diameter of about 4′ 5″. Near it is another rectangular piece of stone which Cunningham mistook for another *gauripāt*, but which in reality was a seat for the priest to sit on. From the numerous stones (some black basalt) lying about the place and used in the modern structure now standing here, it is clear that this was the site of an older Hindu temple, which appears to have been known as the *Kālibāri* of Rājā Parasurām.

In the courtyard, Cunningham found a battered Jain statue without feet, and recognised this to be one of the twenty-four Jain pontiffs. He describes the pedestal of another large figure which he calls the Barāha Avatār. Mr. O'Donnell described this as the figure of a girl with a long fish's tail. This, the latter thinks, has reference to the Hindu times, when the place used to be called *Matsyadesa* (land of fish). A remnant only of this figure is now in existence, and it is difficult to pass any opinion as to what it originally represented. Close to the path leading out of the *Dargāh* on the north side, we come across an interesting half broken stone statue. The statue, which seems to have escaped the notice of previous visitors, represents a humanfigure with a foot on its head. It is thus a symbolical representation of the overthrow of the Buddhists by the Hindus. According to well-known Hindu traditions, Vishnu put down the Asuras by trampling on the head of their chief Gayāsura, and this foot of Vishun is still worshipped in the temple of Gaya. The discovery of this statue is important as showing that Mahāsthān *Garh* was once a

seat of the Buddhistic faith, and also that, with the decline of Buddhism, Hinduism regained its ascendency in Mahāsthān as in other parts of India. This view is also supported by the discovery of both Hindu and Buddhistic temples in the *Garh* as described further on.

Khodār Pāthar.

We then proceed to an elevated mound where a large stone was found embedded by Cunningham and other visitors, and which is locally known as Khodār Pāthar. The whole place has now been dug up, and it is now found that its thickness is 2 ft. 5 in., and not 1 ft. only as Cunningham thought.

The mound faces the road which comes past Dorāb Shāh's entrance. The stone is lying facing east and Cunningham recognised it to be "the massive door sill of the Hindu temple." The stone measures 9 ft. 4 in. and 2 ft. 4 in. by 2 ft. 5 in. After excavating all round, it was found that the stone formed the ornamental top of a rubble stone wall about 9 feet long. On the front face, which was partially hidden under earth, there is a floral design in relief. All round this stone, excavations were made to a depth of 5 feet when the stone pavement of the original temple was reached. The temple measured 24 ft. × 15 ft. and had stone foundations all round up to a height of 3 feet, that is, 2 feet above the floor level. On the top of this stone wall, the building was of brick-in-clay masonry. It seems also probable that the door jambs, the lintels and the ornamental portion above the door were built of stone. While excavating round the stone in the body of the ruined temple, several carved stones were obtained, on one of which four figures of Buddha in meditation and of a disciple are engraved.

On examination of the position of the central stone and the ornamental engraving on its east facing side and the holes on its top, as also of the figures and ornaments on the numerous stones unearthed from this place, it is clear that the mound is of the ruins of a fairly large Buddhistic temple. The temple apparently faced eastward which is not the position of Hindu temples, as all Hindu temples must face either to the west or south. The large stone itself must have been a door sill. It has a notched recess on the top bordering on the western face. In this recess there are four holes. It appears that the two centre holes were for bolts to keep the door closed, whilst the leaves of the door turned in the outside holes. The ornamental work must have been in the front part of the wall near the entrance. From all the circumstances stated above it is almost certain that the temple was a Buddhistic one.

Mānkāli's Kunda.

North of Khodār Pāthar there is a mound of earth scattered over with bricks. Near this mound there is a dried up tank remarkable for its depth, which appears the greater on account of the height of the overhanging mound. According to Cunningham "the builder of the temple (on the mound) is said to have been Rājā Mān Singh who with his brother Tān Singh preceded Rājā

Parasurām." But it appears more probable that Rājā Mān Singh built the temple later, after the destruction of the original fortress. The appearance of the bricks found here, which are larger and thicker than those of other mounds, also supports this view. Cunningham found here many carved bricks and terra-cotta figures in *alto relievo*, etc. He also found the following relics:—Men in various positions. A wheel, or the sun. A ram, a bull and a tiger. A caparisoned horse. A parrot, and an unknown bird. Lion sitting to front. A circular lotus flower. Along with these he obtained two old bronze figures of Ganesa and Garuḍa, and a fragment of blue stone pedestal with the end of an inscription in mediaeval Nāgri characters reading *nāgrahāra*, which, says Cunningham, " would seem to show that the great mound of Mankālikā-Kundi was part of an ancient *agrahāra* or " endowment of land belonging to Brāhmans."*

Sila Devi's Ghāt.

This is a *ghāt* on the riverside about seven chains from the opening of the fortress which must have been the real *ghāt*, when the river itself flowed past the fortress, in days gone by. But near the entrance there are no signs of a *ghāt*, nor does tradition point to a *ghāt* being ever in existence here. Mr. O'Donnell thinks that Pātharghāttā near Govinda's *dwipa* is the Sila Devi's *ghāt*. According to Mr. Beveridge the legend of the beautiful Sila Devi has its origin in a mispronunciation. The original name of the place having been Sila Dwipa, the populace started the tradition of Sila Devi. There is no flight of stairs in Sila Devi's *ghāt*. Cunningham following O'Donnell considers Pātharghāttā to be the site of Sila Devi's *ghāt*. Mr. Batavyal followed Mr. Beveridge and considered the story of Sila Devi to be a myth. According to tradition, however, Sila Devi to save her honour jumped into the Karatoyā at this spot and died.

Parasurām's palace.

There is a mound north of Khodār Pāthar, also overstrewn with large number of small sized old bricks, which is supposed to be the site of the old place of Parasurām. During the present excavations, two rooms have been found inside the mound. The rooms have brick floors and the height from floor to plinth offset is about 3 feet. The superstructure above plinth to the height of 4 feet is still standing. Inside the room is sand plastered and whitewashed. While excavating the mound, two small clay balls, one with some ornamental lines, have been obtained. Both of these are coloured red. Near Parasurām's house is the famous *Jeat Kunda* (the well of life). Tradition relates that Parasurām resuscitated his soldiers with the water of this well as soon as they were killed by the Muhammadans, but the *fakir* having learnt this secret, destroyed the life-giving power of the water by throwing a piece of beef into the well, with the help of a kite. This well is a very large one but is now nearly choked with brick-bats. Its diameter is about 14 feet at the top. It has been built offset-fashion, so that as it goes deeper the diameter diminishes.

* Cunningham's Archaeological Survey Report, XV, page 109.

Bairāgi's house.

The name given to the ruins of buildings near the north-east corner of the fortress. The bricks lying about here are larger than those of other mounds. This shows that these buildings were built at a later period by some *sannyāsis* who settled in the holy place.

Kālidaha.

Originally the *daha* extended from Chāndsi to Jogir Bhuban and joined the Nāgar river with the Karatoyā. Tradition relates that great merchant princes of those days used this canal for commercial purposes. Even at the present day the lake covers nearly two miles of country and is very broad and deep in parts. In the middle of the lake there is an island called "Padmā's house," which is visited annually by fishermen who erect temporary huts there and entertain the curious with many stories about the happenings in the lake in days gone by.

Parasuram's Sabhābāti.

The road which leads from Shāh Sultān's grave and Khodār Pāthar to Mathurā village, after emerging from the fortress goes past, what is called the *Sabhābāti* or the audience hall of Parasurām. This part of the fortress does not appear to have been examined by Cunningham and the other visitors. The building stood on a high embankment which runs parallel to the western wall of the fortification on the outer side of the Gilātolā *khāl*. The embankment is brick-lined all round in order to protect the embankments from the eroding action of water. Narrow openings are seen on this bank, which evidently allowed water from Kālidaha to enter Gilātolā *khāl*. The idea seems to have been to have a double line of moats and embankments to check the advance by land or water of an enemy on the only vulnerable side of the fortress.

Govinda's Dwipa.

There is a passage in the north wall by which one can reach the modern Mahāsthān-Sibganj road from the fortress. On the north of this road and overlooking the river is a high mound covered with débris of old buildings. This is known as Govinda's *Dwipa*. The mound was called a *Dwipa*, apparently because in former days it appears to have been surrounded almost on all sides by water. At present the Karatoyā flows past its northern side only, but there is evidence to show that the river washed its eastern face also in the olden days, while a branch of the Kālidaha skirted round its western and southern faces. At the foot of this mound, on the northern side, facing the river there is a long stone wall submerged under water. Cunningham calls this *Silā-ghāt* and says "that at the *ghāt* there is a stone wall from 25 feet to 30 feet in length, with one large carved stone inserted, which no doubt once formed part of a Hindu temple." Mr. O'Donnell says "a steep part of the bank, where there is now a flight of stairs, still bears the name of Sila Devi's *ghāt*." During the course of the present survey this wall was carefully examined by baling out the water from its base and by making extensive excavations all round it. It was found that the wall really is much longer than 30 feet, and what is more important it is clear that the *ghāt* is quite separate from this wall, which last apparently had

never come to view before. The wall embraces the foot of the mound, and is semicircular in shape. It was obviously built to protect the buildings on the mound from the encroachment of the Karatoyā. That this wall was erected during a comparatively later period, probably by the Muhammadans, would appear to be most likely from the fact that it is built almost entirely with stones, some with carved and engraved facings, which no doubt once adorned the temple on the top of the mound. The carved and engraved stones have been inverted and the carved faces turned inwards, in the characteristic fashion of Muhammandan architects, when they used the materials of old Hindu or Buddhist temples. The bathing *ghāt* was however on the eastern side of the mound, and its brick foundation together with a platform and some steps have now been unearthed. As the *ghāt* is much the older structure, it is clear that the Karatoyā originally flowed past the eastern side of this mound, but subsequently a diversion of its bed to the north of the mound took place, which forms the present channel of the river, the original bed being entirely silted up.

In the absence of the discovery of any inscriptions or the figure of any gods or goddesses, it is difficult to say what the original buildings were, of which the ruins have now been discovered. However, numerous stones containing various figures, parts of cornices, mouldings, such as are to be found in Buddhistic temples, have been unearthed, and there is little doubt that a large temple with a bathing *ghāt* at one time adorned this point of the Karatoyā. Tradition connects this mound with the site of Govinda's temple mentioned in the *Skanda purāna.* Most likely the temple was originally Buddhistic, which with the decline of Buddhism was turned into a place of Hindu worship, and which finally underwent further changes when the Moslems were established in the *Garh.*

Naokhila.—An important village, 18 miles east of Bogrā, near the Dāokobā, and the seat of the principal *kachāri* of Dighāpatiyā Rāj. There are a charitable dispensary and a High English school at Naokhilā, both of which are maintained by the Rājā Bāhādur.

Sherpur.—Situated within *parganā* Mimanshāhi, in 24° 40′ N. latitude, and 89° 29′ E. longitude, is the second town in the district in point of population and executive importance, though markedly the first in point of age and historical interest. It is first mentioned in A.D. 1595 in the *Ain-i-Akbari* as the site of a fort, called Salīmnagar in honour of Salīm, the son of Akbar, afterwards famous as the emperor Jahāngīr. It is also described by Abul Fazal and other Muhammadan writers as an important frontier post previous to the conquest of South-Eastern Bengal and the establishment of the Governors of Dacca. In these books it is always spoken of as Sherpur Murchā, to distinguish it from Sherpur Daskāhaniā, now situated in Mymensingh district. It is said to owe its name to the son of an emperor of Delhi named Sher Shāh, *murchā* in Persian means a battery. Rājā Mān Singh,

who was the general of the imperial armies of Akbar in Bengal from A.D. 1589 to 1606, is said to have built a palace in Sherpur. This is very probable, as the place would be a convenient centre from which to operate on Southern Bengal, and particularly on Jessore which then included a large part of the present district of Pābnā, and was held by the rebel *zamīndār* Rājā Pratāpāditya, against whom it is known that Mān Singh was ordered to direct his arms. The continued importance of Sherpur may be judged from the fact that in the map of Bengal made by Van den Broucke, the Dutch Governor in India in 1660, it is one of the three towns given on the great road, which then passed eastwards and northwards from Boāliā, through what are now the districts of Rājshāhi, Pābnā, Bogrā, and Rangpur, to the Assam frontier. In the map it is however scarcely to be recognised under the name "Ceerpoor Mirts." During the last century, whilst the Rājās of Nātor were building up their great estates, one of their chief offices, known as the Bāradwāri *kachāri* or twelve-gated office, was situated in Sherpur, and collected some five lākhs of rupees in rent. The large market held in Sherpur is to the present day called the Bāradwāri *hāt*. The oldest part of the town is now covered with jungle and was to the south-west of the site of the present town. This jungle covers extensive ruins of old mosques and palaces of departed chiefs. Of the Hindu shrines, the temples of the Anādi Linga and Hara Gouri appear to be of a very great age. Of the Muhammadan shrines, the two mosques known as the Kharna Masjid and the Bandagi Sadar Jahan mosques deserve mention. Both the buildings had inscriptions, but the one on Sadar Jahan Masjid has been broken. From the inscriptions on the Kharna Masjid it appears that it was build by one Nawāb Mirjā Murād Khān in the year 989 Hizri (A.D. 1571) during the reign of Akbar the Great.

The interesting ruins of Rājbāri are also quite close to Sherpur, being only about four miles to the south-west of the town. There is no record to show what family of princes held their court at Rājbāri. Tradition relates that Rāja Ballāl Sen lived here after he abdicated his throne in favour of his son. The ruins are extensive and cover a space of over four square miles. Adjoining the débris of old buildings are numerous tanks still known as Chāndi Pukur, Kanji Pukur, Tarai, and Meghi. The last two are supposed to have been named after two favourite servants of the king.

Sherpur is now the residence of the principal landholders of the district who are not absentees. Three of these families are deserving of special notice, the Giri Gosāins, the Sānyāls, and the Munshis, who are all Brāhmans by caste. The first Giri Gosāin who settled in Sherpur was named Dān. Second in descent from him by religious adoption was Raghunāth Giri Gosāin, who for some time managed the property of Rājā Prānnāth Rāi of Dighāpatiyā, and afterwards leased from him an estate called Naokhilā, situated in the east of Bogrā district. In this way he seems to have accumulated so great a fortune that on his death,

his two disciples and heirs were able to spend Rs. 15,000 each on his funeral or *srāddha*. This ceremony, which took place about the beginning of this century, is described by local writers as having been particularly magnificent. The family, if it may be so called, still exists, and is possessed of considerable landed property. The Sānyāls owe their wealth to service under the East India Company, in the days when great power was still left in the hands of native officials. Krishna Chandra Sānyāl, the founder of the family, commenced life as *sarishtādār* or head clerk in the Nātor criminal court, from which he was promoted to the same post in the large magistracy office of Murshidābād. He was then transferred to the office of head clerk of the Board of Revenue in Calcutta. Having amassed much wealth in these appointments, he set up as a *zamīndār*, and purchased several of the smaller estates of the Nator Rāj in this district, having previously secured his valuable Calcutta post for his son Mādhab Chandra. At this time there was a *munsifi* or civil court in Sherpur; and Krishna Chandra had sufficient interest to get his brother Gobind Chandra appointed its judge. He also seems to have made good use of his official position, as some years after he and his son took their places as recognised landholders in the district. The two branches of the family subsequently quarrelled, and lost much of their property in the prosecution of civil actions. The common ancestor of the Munshis, Tarafdārs, and Majumdārs, who are now the leading families in Sherpur, was Lakhan Rām Tarafdār, who commenced life as a *pāikār* or broker for silk cocoons, and afterwards owned filatures of his own. He had four sons—Braja Kisor Tarafdār, Anup Nārāyan Munshi, Rāmkisor Tarafdār, and Nabakisor Majumdār. The first was a man without any ambitions and his eldest son was treasurer in the Bogrā Collectorate in 1860. Anup Nārāyan was the ablest of the family, and acquired considerable wealth by not very reputable means. He obtained his title of *munshi* from holding the post of Persian clerk in the managing office of the Rājā of Nātor's estates, about the time when Kāli Sankar Rāi, the founder of the Narāil family of Jessore, was the *diwān*. Anup Nārāyan is said to have used his influence, as already stated, to shelter a body of *dākāits* or robbers and burglars under one Pandit Shāh, and shared largely in the profits of their crimes.

Anup Nārāyan's connection with Pandit Shāh was discovered, and he and his brother Braja Kisor were imprisoned in the Nātor jail for nine years. He is said to have had a very easy life in prison, and to have bribed so profusely that he was able to go home at the time of his mother's death, and perform her *srāddha* with great display. After that he returned to jail, and completed his full term of imprisonment. Anup Nārāyan's only son being childless adopted as his heir the father of Rādha Raman Munshi. The latter died in 1906 and his brother Chandra Kishore Munshi, who is over 70 years of age, is now the head of the family.

Besides the Brāhman *zamīndārs* there are some wealthy Shāhās who own large *zamīndāris* in the district. The Shāhās hold a comparatively low position in the Hindu society, but as their opulence in Sherpur dates from beyond that of the Munshis, they have been treated with consideration and Brāhmans have eaten at their funeral feast.

There is an unusually large number of brick-built houses in Sherpur, which have given employment to so many men in building, that one of the wards of the town is called the Bricklayers' Ward, in consequence of their residing in it. Though the town is remarkable for the large number of Hindu inhabitants, it is surrounded on all sides by places holy for Musalmāns. The *dargāhs* or shrines of Turkun Saiad are highly revered. He was a Ghāzi slain in battle by the Hindu king Ballāl Sen. One shrine is called Sir Makām where his head fell, and the other Dhar Makām, where his body now rests. About a mile to the east is a small village called Kāfura, which is a name often given to Muhammadan eunuchs. Stretching south from Sherpur there is a high, raised embankment, of little width at the top. It leads to the Hindu temple of Bhawāni Thākurāni, and was made by Rāni Bhawāni of Nātor, to enable votaries to approach the shrine on foot during the rains, when much of the country is under water. A similar embankment runs westwards from the temple to the village of Chaugān in Rājshāhi, and was made by a *zamīndār* of the latter place, with the same object.

The municipality of Sherpur was created in the year 1876. Its income in 1907-08 from all sources was Rs. 8,079, and as has been noted elsewhere is hardly sufficient to enable the commissioners to carry out any radical improvements. All the roads are yet *kachchā* and thick jungle, chiefly of bamboo and mango, over shadow most part of the town. There is a High school with a fine building, the gift of the Munshi *zamīndārs*. There is a local charitable dispensary under the management of the municipality. A new inspection bungalow has been built in the town and the police *thānā* occupies a central position.

Sibganj.—A place 13 miles north-west of Bogrā. During Muhammadan times it was an important military station. Is the home of Saiad Muazzam Husain Chaudhuri, a local *zamīndār* descended from the Khadem of Shāh Sultān Mahiswār of Mahāsthān. There are a police station and a Middle English school at Sibganj.

Vasu Bihar.—A place of antiquarian interest, 13 miles to the south-east of Khetlāl, and on the east bank of the Nāgar river. The village was visited by Cunningham who identified the large mounds of bricks which he found there with the ruins of the Buddhistic monastery named Poshīpo described by Hiuen Tsiang on the occasion of his visit to the old town of Paundravardhana. In this village is also to be found a very fine sheet of water called Susong *dighi* or Rājā Susanga's tank.

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